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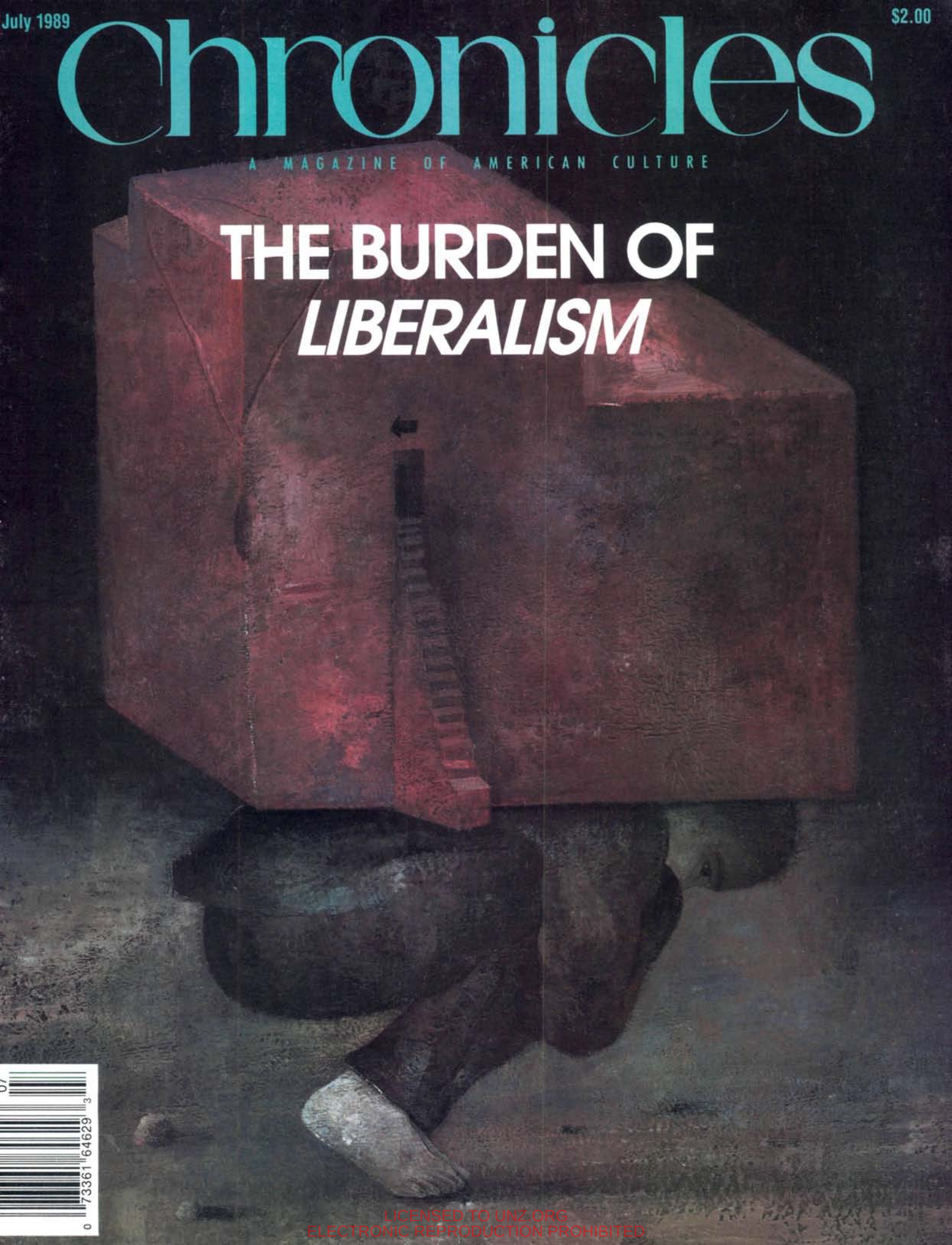
Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

THE BURDEN OF *LIBERALISM*



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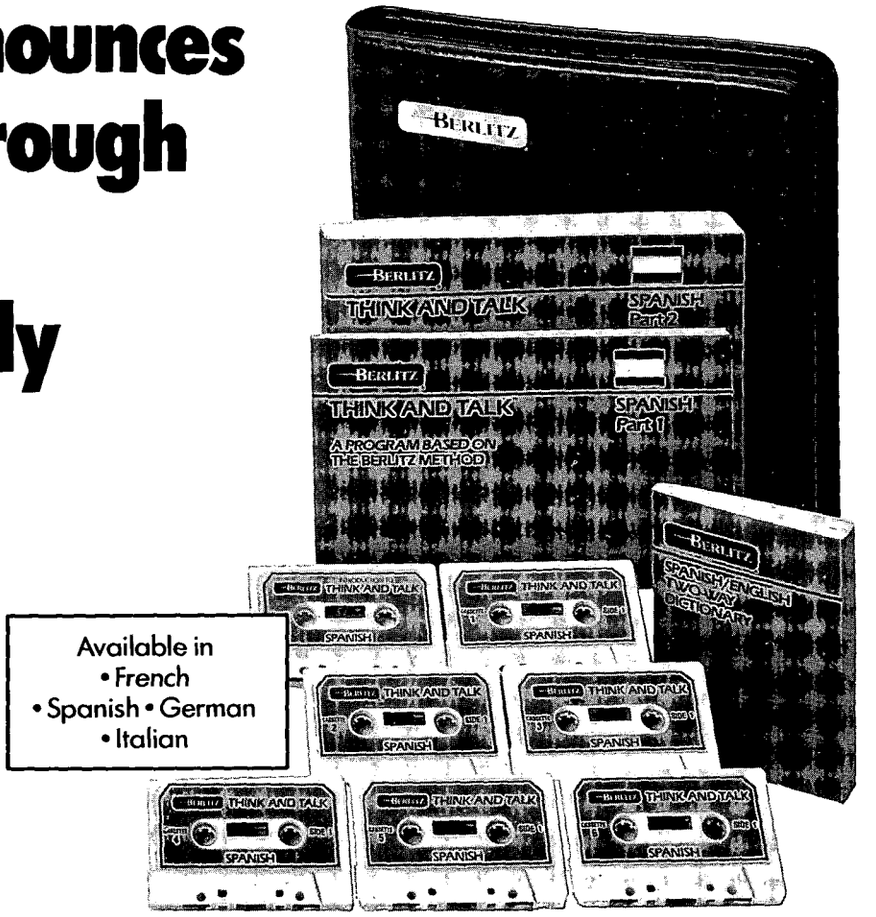

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Vol. 13, No. 7 July 1989

On 'Historical Revisionism'

A correction on Arthur Eckstein's excellent essay "Caution: Historical Revisionism at Work." Eckstein says that Noam Chomsky never visited North Vietnam. That is not the case.

The following are excerpts from a speech Chomsky made in Hanoi on April 14, 1970 welcoming the 1970 "spring offensive" of the American antiwar movement. (The speech was monitored by the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service.)

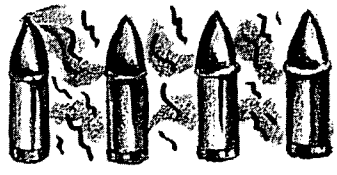
"The people of Vietnam will win, they must win, because your cause is the cause of humanity as it moves forward toward liberty and justice, toward the socialist society in which free, creative men control their own destiny. . . . We are deeply grateful to you that you permit us to be part of your brave and historic struggle. We hope that there will continue to be strong bonds of comradeship between the people of Vietnam and the many Americans who wish you success and who detest with all of their being the hateful activities of the American government." In the speech he referred to the United States as an "empire, that has no place in the 20th century, that has only the capacity to repress and murder and destroy."

—Rael Jean Isaac
Irvington, NY

On 'Postwar Oxford'

In an otherwise interesting—and occasionally amusing—reminiscence (April 1989) Geoffrey Wagner included one statement that was indisputably tainted. Writing of the "exotic world" of Oxford's dons following World War II's conclusion, Mr. Wagner said of them that "nearly all had involved themselves in some sort of fictional fantasy life on the side, perhaps to compensate for the lack of reality allowed them in the Holocaust." Then he proceeded to mention C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, among others, in regard to this alleged flight from reality.

Mr. Wagner seems to imply that Lewis and Tolkien had skirted their duties in wartime. In fact, both Lewis and Tolkien were well acquainted with the brutalities of war; indeed, both saw action in the diabolical trench system of the Western Front. Lewis arrived at the front lines on his birthday, Nov. 29, 1917, suffered from the notorious trench fever and was wounded by three pieces of shrapnel—one of which remained in his body until death—in action at the Battle of Arras. Tolkien, too, suffered from trench fever, and he fought in the four-month horror known as the Battle of the Somme.



In their middle age, both these scholars were members of the Home Guard, and spent many nights on duty in Oxford. Also, it must be noted that Lewis, in 1946, had not "just published *Perelandra* and *The Screwtape Letters*." *Perelandra* had come out in 1943 and *Screwtape* in 1942. But these "trifles" of fantasy fiction were not Lewis's only writings during the war. He also wrote *Rehabilitation and Other Essays*, *The Problem of Pain*, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, *The Abolition of Man*, *That Hideous Strength*, and, of course, his *Broadcast Talks* via the BBC which became *Mere Christianity*. It has been said that Lewis's was the second most famous voice in England during the war.

Thus, the records show that C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien were not the ivory tower, armchair scholars that returning soldiers would have resented, following World War II. Mr. Wagner may have thought Tolkien a humorless bore, and he may deprecate Lewis's "flat jokes about cats," but he should not hint that they were cowards. The records say otherwise.

—Terrence Neal Brown
Memphis, TN

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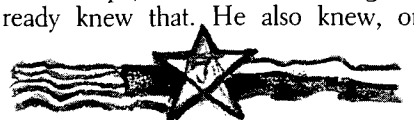
THE MARCH CHRONICLES stirred up a great deal of hostility in strange quarters, where freedom of expression used to defend everything but unfashionable opinions. The Perspective essay on immigration even attracted the attention of a newspaper editor in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, named Paul Greenberg. In an op-ed piece published in the *Washington Times*, Greenberg applies such terms as "hysteria," "xenophobic," and "ugly alarum" to *Chronicles'* editor. This sort of response to any controversial question has always been typical of those who are able to muster neither facts nor argument to support their sentimental prejudices. Ordinarily, we should not take any notice of such forays into political journalism, but in the conclusion of his editorial, Mr. Greenberg descended far enough into the gutter to attract attention:

> The way out for America lies in reviving the immigration laws of the 1920s, according to Mr. Fleming. Those laws, he said, "made it very clear that we intended to be what we had always been: a European nation." Preferably a Western European nation, since that's the way the quotas were skewed. If those laws hadn't been changed, the late Leopold Tyrmand—a scholar who ornamented The Rockford Institute when it was turning out invariably respectable work, a writer of charm, humility and insight who devoted himself to defending America to the Americans—might have had a much harder time getting into this country from his native Poland.

As Sam Johnson used to say of his less honorable opponents, "He lies and he knows he lies." My argument, that immigration policy should serve the national interest rather than the needs of the human race, is hardly startling, and I explicitly argued that potential contribution to American society should be among the highest criteria for admission. America already gives some priority to persons of distinction in useful fields of endeavor, and it was on that basis that we welcomed my late friend Leopold into the United States. If we did reinstitute a system of national quotas reflecting the historical patterns of settlement, it is hard to see how the Poles could be affected in any way other than positively. There are already a huge number of Americans who can trace ancestors back to Poland, many of them Polish Jews like Mr. Tyrmand.

Like all of us, Leopold was not without his faults, but hypocrisy was not one of them. One day we were discussing immigration policy and a vigorous piece we had just received from Clyde Wilson, who seemed to be arguing that intellectual émigrés to the US had done as much harm as good. Tyrmand was not at all perturbed. "Professor [which is what he liked to call me], there are two Americas: Plymouth Rock ['Better call it Jamestown,' I interjected] and Ellis Island. What Ellis Island Americans like me have to realize is that their America would not be possible without the Plymouth Rock—or Jamestown—America." He went on to say that it was British institutions of responsible self-government that paved the way for the openness and generosity of American democracy. If we destroyed the institutions of Plymouth Rock, we would end up like the rest of the world.

Leopold and I differed over a great many things, but not over immigration. The principles outlined in *Chronicles* would actually boost immigration (of Jews as well as Christians) from Eastern Europe, but Mr. Greenberg already knew that. He also knew, or



should have known, that it was Leopold Tyrmand who chose me as his successor. To drag my late colleague and friend into such a discussion, while at the same time entirely misrepresenting the nature of the argument, Mr. Greenberg has descended to the lower depths of yellow journalism. (TF)

FREE SPEECH has been one of the great American luxuries, but according to the University of Wisconsin it may prove to be too expensive. In April its Board of Regents passed a rule that would make racial, ethnic, or sexist epithets grounds for expulsion. This does not come out of nowhere: last fall the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity at the Madison campus was disciplined for having its pledges hold a mock slave auction in blackface, and there have been at least two other similar incidents.

The original language contained a phrase stating that "epithets shall be presumed to have been uttered with the required intent." "Intent" was defined elsewhere in the document as intent to demean a student or to create a hostile educational atmosphere. With that phrase, the university was putting the burden of proof on the accused; any reported remark that was found (by some "objective" panel?) to be sexist or otherwise offensive would be in and of itself sufficient evidence of intent to harm—and out the student would go. At the urging of the Wisconsin ACLU, that particular provision was dropped.

While it is some progress to have removed that phrase, it's not much. Wisconsin has still taken a pick axe to the First Amendment. Even a private school can hardly claim the moral high ground when it moves to restrain that most fundamental practice of free speech—opening our mouths and talking. As it is, the University of Wisconsin is a public institution, funded by the federal and state government, and supposedly subject to those guarantees in the federal and state constitutions that protect a person's right to open his mouth and make a fool (or worse) of himself.

Wisconsin is not alone. As Nat Hentoff reports in the May *Progressive*, the University of Buffalo Law School faculty voted unanimously for a "Statement Regarding Intellectual Freedom, Tolerance, and Political Harassment" that says in part that the students' right to free speech within the law school must be limited by "the

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responsibility to promote equality and justice." Anyone directing remarks at "another's race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or sex preference" is in for trouble.

Similar regulations are in force at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and at Emory, and others are under review at Stanford. As one of the heads of Stanford's student government, Canetta Ivy, put it, "We don't put as many restrictions on freedom of speech as we should." The Afro-American studies major who hopes to go to law school told *The New York Times* further that "What we are proposing is not completely in line with the First Amendment. I'm not sure it should be. We at Stanford are trying to set a standard different from what society at large is trying to accomplish."

The regents in Wisconsin have rejected an emergency measure, introduced in the Assembly by Milwaukee Democrat Rep. G. Spencer Coggs, that could have put their rule into effect as early as the summer session. At press time the House had approved the bill unanimously, while the Senate had as yet to vote. Coggs says that while he agrees "that divergent philosophies should be allowed on a college campus," still, "You cannot yell fire in a crowded theater. You cannot cause a hostile atmosphere on campus." He seems to see no difference between the immediate threat to life in the former case, and the immediate threat to hurt feelings in the latter. After all, none of the proponents of these muzzling orders is talking about physical abuse, which is of course illegal and a matter for the police. They are talking about speech.

Wisconsin's regents want to leave some time for the public to debate the matter—and if you want to argue you'd best do it quick, while such arguments are still permissible. The student-faculty senate at Madison sides with Mr. Coggs, and thinks things are moving too slowly. So much for outspoken youth. So much for the slow victory of sensitivity—and censorship—over the First Amendment. (KD)

JUDICIAL TYRANNY is a familiar phenomenon as judges routinely take charge of school systems and strike down state laws on abortion, pornography, and murder. Recently, one federal judge has even changed the property taxes in Kansas City, MO, while a federal district judge in Des Moines upheld the right of convicts in Iowa to read dirty books and magazines. The most interesting case, however, involves a Vermont Supreme Court justice who has apparently set out to test the old definition of tyranny, the maxim that no man can be the judge of his own case.

Judge Louis Peck is 70 years old, and according to the Vermont Constitution, he is required to retire. While it may seem cruel and counterproductive to force judges into retirement, our experience with sickly and superannuated judges on the US Supreme Court—William O. Douglas, most prominently in the past, and Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan on the present court—indicates the wisdom of Vermont lawmakers. Judge Peck not only disagrees, but he continues to sit in open defiance of the state constitution, because a 1986 amendment to the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act removed the upper limit (which had been set at 70). Judge Peck stands by the federal law, and in 1987 the attorney general of Vermont expressed a written opinion that federal law must prevail.

In any contest between state and federal law, justice or constitutionality is rarely the issue. All that matters is the superior power of the federal government. In this case, however, the opinion of the state attorney general is only advisory and does not have the force of a court decision. Rather than step aside and wait for the courts to decide, Judge Peck has preferred to present the amusing spectacle of the drunkard who refuses to leave when the party is over. He brings the laws of his state into general contempt and displays once again the arrogance and despotism we have come to expect from all too many judges. (TF)

IMMIGRATION IS increasingly becoming a major subject for concern among Americans. In a recent report released by FAIR, 51 percent of 800 Californians surveyed thought the US was accepting "too many" legal immigrants, while only 35 percent replied "too few" or "about right." Sixty-nine percent thought there ought to be a limit, as opposed to only 26 percent who favored the "education/skill" criteria advocated in the March *Chronicles*, almost twice the number who wanted "family connections" to be the primary emphasis.

When the questions got around to illegal immigration, an even clearer picture emerges: 63 percent considered it a very serious problem, 21 percent somewhat serious, and only 13 percent no problem. Only 9 percent thought the government was doing a good or excellent job of controlling the situation. If Richard Marin of the *Washington Post* had seen the survey, he might have included it in his defamatory story on "The Emerging Signs of the New Xenophobia." Xenophobia, in the *Post*'s vocabulary, turns out to mean any concern for the national interest as opposed to the salvation of the world or the global economy.

If the globalist frenzy were restricted to that leftist fringe that considers illegal immigration "no problem," and the nation state an outworn bit of 19th-century political theory, one might have grounds for hope. But recently political liberals have tended to take more sober positions on questions of national interest. It is "conservatives" who now favor policies of missionary democratism, pander to multinational corporations, and oppose any restrictions on foreign ownership in the US, as Walter Mossberg wrote in a perceptive piece in *The Wall Street Journal* (April 3). Pointing out that the one-world concept has fallen into disrepute even in the Soviet Union, he describes the new conservative one-worlders as "economists and academics who believe that in a global economy . . . the economic fortunes of individual countries aren't important any more." Rejecting extremist calls for vindictive, protectionist legislation, Mossberg concludes that it is simply "dreamy" to imagine "that the genuine and legitimate political interests among nations can be wished away with visions of an all-encompassing, mutually beneficial world economy."

The same prudence applied to immigration would dictate a rational plan based primarily on considerations of national interest and a frank recognition that we are culturally a European country. Family ties and political con-

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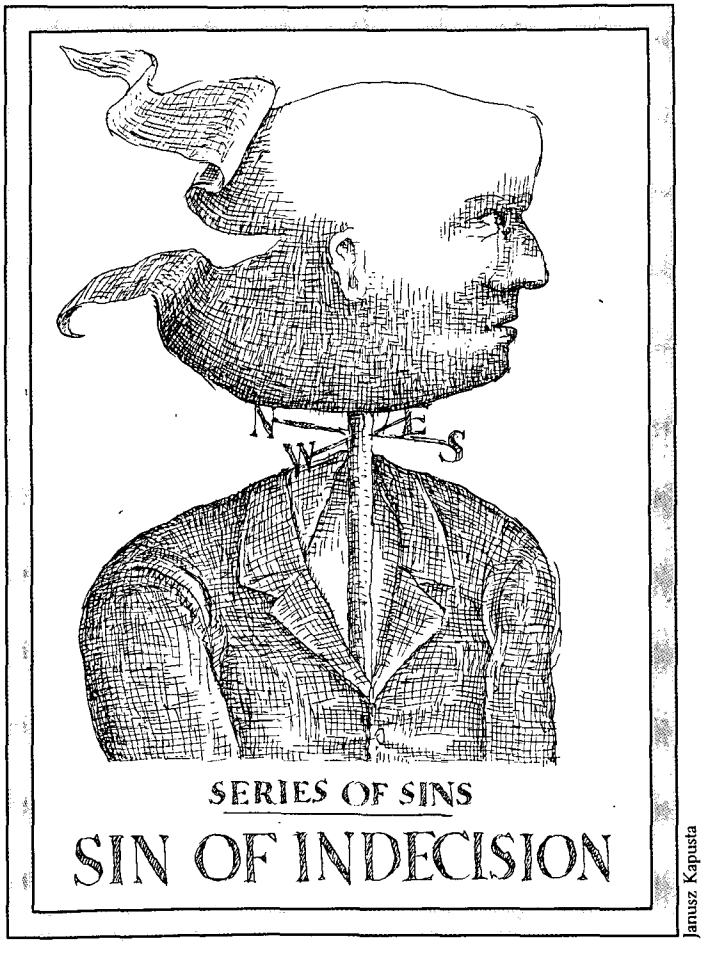
siderations would have to place a distant second and third. The worst immigration policy proposed in several years comes from the Bush administration, which has asked Congress to allow up to 150,000 additional immigrants over the next five years under a new classification of "foreign policy interest." While other political refugees would be included, Soviet citizens would be the primary beneficiaries of the program. What ever happened to *perestroika*? Mr. Bush's call for expanded immigration goes hand in hand with his secretary of state's aggressive democratic globalism. As one American elder statesman remarked to me recently, we shouldn't judge these global democrats too harshly. It may turn out they are just cynics out to manipulate public opinion. On the other hand, maybe these ex-liberal Texans are simply trying to prove their conservative credentials. (TF)

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ART was supposed to solve the headaches of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago—still reeling from last year's response to its display of a painting depicting the late Mayor Harold Washington in frilly underwear—when it hurriedly arranged an all-minority show at the school. But instead of peace and quiet, they got one "Dread" Scott Tyler, whose now-famous "What Is the Proper Way to Display the American Flag" invited patrons to write their comments on a ledger accessible only by walking on Old Glory, draped across the floor. What followed was predictable. A great many Chicagoans and other citizens took umbrage: veterans, in particular, didn't cotton to shedding their blood for the likes of Tyler, a self-described "proletarian internationalist" who "welcome[s] . . . the targeting and torching of this symbol" worldwide. Civil liberties types compared protests against the exhibit to the Ayatollah's contract on Salman Rushdie. Politicians passed resolutions condemning the display, and courts leapt to its defense, inevitably invoking the First Amendment and overrunning the law against desecration. ("Placing the flag on the floor is not mutilating, defacing, or trampling it," said Cook County Judge Kenneth Gillis.)

It is hard to credit the sincerity of people who claim to believe that grimy bootprints on the stars and stripes are what the Founders had in mind when they protected free speech. One rather suspects, as someone said of *The New York Times* editorialists, that when they routinely side with America's enemies, it's not that they're suppressing their patriotic instincts in the interests of higher justice; rather, that they have no patriotic instincts to suppress. Reaction against the display may have gone overboard at times (the alderman who said that "There has never been a more dastardly act in the City of Chicago" was being, to say no more, extravagant), but the public's outrage was the honest, healthy response of the sort of folk without whom a nation cannot get along. (MK)

EDWARD LEVINE, professor emeritus of social psychology at Loyola University of Chicago, was an academic and a truthteller, a combination increasingly hard to find in the modern university. His wide range of interests was reflected in his work, from his book *The Irish and Irish Politicians: A Study of Social and Cultural Alienation* (University of Notre Dame: 1966) to articles in popular and scholarly journals on such subjects as religious cults, grade inflation, and mental health. His greatest concern, however, was for the family and the threat posed to it by the legitimization and celebration of deviance. In one of his last articles, "Homosexuality and the Family" in the July 1988 *Chronicles*, Professor Levine warned that "the homosexuals' drive to win moral legitimacy must attempt to render both arbitrary and unjust the religious values underpinning the worthiness of marriage, family, and child-rearing." To modern academia, such a prospect is positively desirable, an essential part of clearing away the clutter of the past in order to get on with the important business of building the brave new world. We regret the loss of a courageous scholar who saw his role as the preservation, not the destruction, of the old standards. R.I.P. (MK)



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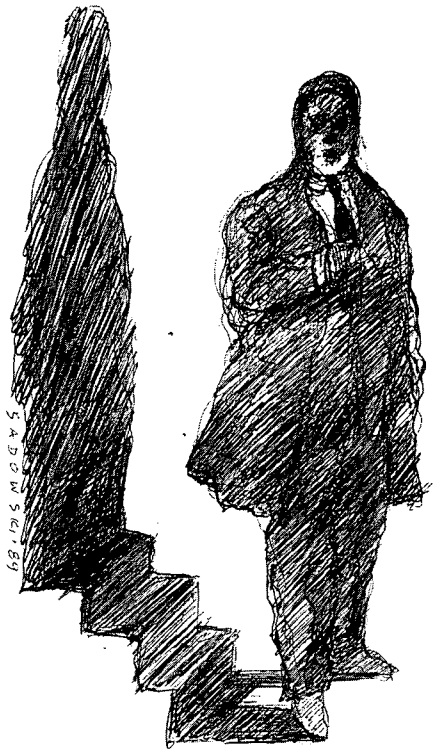

Second Thoughts

by Thomas Fleming

These days everyone is having second thoughts—about Vietnam and the 60's, about American history, about what it means to be a liberal and what it means to be a conservative. Rather than be left out of the rewrite, I too have been having second thoughts about what I did and did not do some 20 years ago. I was on the point of being drafted on three separate occasions, and while I should have realized that the Army would never take a flat-footed man who had had operations on both eyes, I still brooded about the war and my possible participation.

Conventionally leftist, I did not see any reason for our presence in Southeast Asia—although I did believe we were engaged in a global struggle against the Soviet Union, one we could not afford to lose. I wrote my congressman, L. Mendel Rivers, to declare my opposition to the war. Mendel, in addition to being chairman of the House Armed Forces Committee, was a sort of friend of my father. (I also knew his godson, aide, and successor, Mendel Davis.) Even so, I did not expect an answer and when it came, it gave me a jolt. The greatest hawk in Washington said he agreed with me, that if we were not going to fight to win, then it was wrong to waste American lives.

One American life I had no intention of wasting was my own—not that I was afraid of dying in Southeast Asia. Mendel had promised my father that if I were drafted, I could have my pick of places to go and suggested Army Languages School and a tour in the Mediterranean. But at the time it seemed absolutely pointless to interrupt my studies and live like an overworked Boy Scout for six months. I'm sure it would have done me good.

I principally thought about going to Canada, not so much to evade the draft but in search of a less bureaucratized country (how little I knew about Canada!) that still contained vast stretches of wilderness and preserved a sense of traditional community. Some of my ancestors had fled to the Maritimes in the 1770's to evade a war they could not honorably take part in (as Scots they had taken the oath not to fight against the King), and I foolishly saw myself as following in their footsteps. I fixed on Cape Breton as my destination—surely the loveliest place in North America—and discussed the project with my father, expressing great dissatisfaction with life in these United States. He only gave me one piece of advice. "When you go up there among the bluenoses," he warned, "don't be running down the United States. Decent men, Scots in particular, have no use for a man who speaks ill of his own country."

In the end I did not go to Cape Breton and faced the induction physical in Raleigh. Of course I flunked it, but I kept on thinking about what my father had said. Was I guilty of disloyalty to my country, and didn't I have to choose either to remain here as a loyal citizen or else emigrate? I'm not sure that I was ever disloyal, but the answer to the second question was undubitably yes, and I gradually began to develop a strong dislike for the flag-burners, excrement-

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hurlers, big-talking nothing-doing rioters who shut down universities and disrupted the Democratic Convention in Chicago, 1968. I thought then and I continue to think of them as spoiled children who, if they could not have this country on their own terms, would do anything they could to destroy it.

They were, by and large, repulsive people: Tom Hayden, a man willing to live off his wife's earnings until she booted him out; Jerry Rubin, who now prances around the country celebrating his version of free enterprise and debating with his old pal, the recently deceased Abbie Hoffman — a classic 60's nerd, witless and shameless, who in later years turned into a drug-dealing con-artist with an appetite for women under 21.

Some of the 60's kids have wised up, and Americans, as always, have been quick to forgive them. I don't see why we should. The Christian doctrine of forgiveness is very clear: the sinner must confess his faults, ask forgiveness, and resolve to sin no more. I'm still waiting for these ex-radicals to beg forgiveness, and even when they do I'm not sure that any sensible person is particularly eager to hear their opinions on politics, literature, religion, or American history, because — and this should hardly come as a surprise — most of them have not changed as much as they would have us believe.

Loving one's own people does not imply a diminished regard for the rest of the human race. On the contrary, a man who does not cherish his family and fellow-citizens and national traditions is probably incapable of loving anyone or anything.

What did they believe then? That the history of America was in domestic affairs a record of atrocities against blacks, Indians, Jews, immigrants, women, "sexual minorities," and against nature itself; in foreign affairs it was a story of white Christian capitalist imperialism against meek and virtuous native populations. It would take, so they said, a revolution to clean up this sinful and polluted land.

What do they believe now? Those who call themselves conservative have dropped a few items of the indictment. They no longer oppose capitalism — at least in the sense of welfare state capitalism — and have lost their sympathy for Indians, homosexuals, and the environment, and many of them have come to realize that the Third World includes violent Muslims whose principal aim in life is to destroy Christian America along with the state of Israel. But that is about as far as it goes.

Of course, they no longer talk so loftily about the criminal record of the United States, but that is because they actually had their revolution in the form of a civil rights movement that destroyed the autonomy of state and local government and elevated a radical leftist (if not worse) satyr to the top of the American pantheon. Unlike the serious left, they do not need to rewrite American history, because they already have rewritten it as the march of democracy and equality, first across America and now across the world.

Whatever they call themselves — leftists, liberals, or conservatives — the 60's radicals still hate the United States as it actually was and is, and in all their pretended patriotism they are as sincere as the Anglican clergymen who say, yes, they believe in the Christian doctrines summed up in the Nicene Creed, because there is a sense in which God could become man, which is to say that every man has it within himself to attain to a purer spirituality, and in a sense God could be said to have created the universe, etc., etc. It is in this same sense that the flag-burners of 1968 are the really loyal and patriotic Americans.

Perhaps they are right. Cultural leftism, in both its benign and malignant forms, is now the dominant ideology in the US. The malignant form is easiest to comprehend, because it is an open attack on all that is best in the traditions of the civilized West. The radical cultural leftists are against Greek and Latin, Christianity, and the languages, history, and literature of Europe. On one flank, they are rewriting the syllabuses of humanities and history courses at all levels of instruction; on the other, they are tearing down all obstacles to mass migrations from the Third World. These two movements are part of a concerted effort to destroy any residual sense of what America owes to its European past.

I never heard it more clearly expressed than in a throw-away remark delivered by a University of Texas law professor at a philosophy conference in Atlanta. Commenting on the furor over changes in the Stanford humanities curriculum, the professor (whose salary is paid by the good people of Texas) asked what all the fuss was about. Sure, the old curriculum had good things in it, but it also included examples of Christian bigotry — writers like Dante and Milton. As a Jew, he said, he was glad that Stanford students would no longer be required to read such authors. The same man agreed with several Ivy League professors, who expressed some trepidation about being in so dangerous and bigoted a city as Atlanta. Compared with what, I asked; New Haven? This all took place on the grounds of a Methodist-supported college.

In the context of American universities, the UT law professor hardly counts as a radical, and it is hard to understand what is going on in American education if one fails to realize that such opinions are mainstream. With very few exceptions, even the opposition to malignant cultural leftism shares most of its fundamental assumptions. This is why I refer to it as the benign form of the cancer, although benign is not quite the *mot juste*. ("Temporarily in remission" might be a more accurate term.) For example, defenders of the Stanford humanities curriculum argued that even if Western civilization was rooted in bigotry and oppression, what better way was there to learn about such things? Besides, the only important thing to know about America is its openness to all forms of experience. According to educationists like Diane Ravitch, schools can have Third World humanities and the classics. And anyway, with unrestricted immigration the ruling classes will need some form of introduction to turn these people into obedient

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citizens, i.e., religious skeptics, sexual equalitarians, and global democrats. Americans who continue to love their country, respect its traditions, and study its history—what are they, after all, but bigots, nativists, xenophobes, and racists? That, at any rate, is what the cultural leftists would like us to believe. A rather different approach to our history is provided by a black Virginian, Don Anderson, who contributed an essay to *Why the South Will Survive*, edited by Clyde Wilson. Unequivocally opposed to slavery and highly critical of the behavior of Southern whites, he refused to write off the experiences of the black men and women who lived as slaves; holding no brief for Southern slaveholders, he still tended the graves of his ancestors. At the same time he has learned to play the bagpipes enjoyed by the ancestors of his slave-owning white ancestors. Most important, he has turned to the slaveholder Jefferson as the inspiration for his National Association for the Southern Poor. Like most Americans, he had reasons for condemning some aspects of the American historical experience, but unlike cultural leftists he refused to fall into the habit of hating his country.

Loving one's own people does not imply a diminished regard for the rest of the human race. On the contrary, a man who does not cherish his family and fellow-citizens and national traditions is probably incapable of loving anyone or anything. Here lies the basic fault of all global ideologies—Communism, Socialism, Democratism: they are all based on hatred of the particular, and what begins in hate can never result in love.

How unloving and unlovable the 60's radicals really were. They mistreated their girlfriends, lived like pigs, and gloated over the destruction they could do, if ever they got into power. More to the point, perhaps, they were deliberately rude to anyone who got in their way or made the mistake of trying to reason with them.

Once in the late 60's I found myself in Los Angeles during an airline strike. My mother had been desperately sending messages up and down the West Coast, informing me that I only had a few days to get back to South Carolina, because I had been drafted. Wearily, I stood in line at the Greyhound terminal and succeeded in catching a bus for El Paso, which was at least vaguely in the right direction. Sitting next to me was a gigantic Marine, just back from Vietnam. Without too much rage, he began describing how the "peace queers" had assaulted him at the airport in language almost identical to Johnny Rambo's great speech: "Who the hell were they to protest me?" As luck would have it, we were both headed for South Carolina. It was a long ride, catching buses that zigzagged our way across the continent. No matter how many times I changed buses, I couldn't shake him. He dogged me as persistently as the memory of a bad blind date.

It was not as if we had a great deal in common. "How bout you and me getting some books to read at the next stop?" he asked. When I returned with a light novel (deliberately chosen so as not to avoid the charge of pretension), he couldn't conceal his disgust and disappointment. When I asked what books he had bought, he proudly showed me a handful of comic books.

Among the things of the trip that I recall—eating the best beef barbecue in the world and drinking Mexican beer in a little diner he knew in Dallas, the endless gruesome stories of combat told in a matter-of-fact voice, and his eagerness to go back and start collecting the combat pay again—one incident stands out.

It was the first day, and the bus stopped at a crossroads town and a pleasant-looking (not exactly pretty) country girl dressed in gingham got on board. My friend confessed that he knew a girl just like that back in Arkansas and he intended to marry her some day. His reveries were disturbed by loud talk and coarse laughter from the back. He turned around and spotted two "long-hairs," obviously half-stoned. He barked at them to pipe down, but they kept up their increasingly offensive banter. It was unpleasant, but no worse than what we often hear in public places. "If they don't quit, I'm going to have to do something."

I thought he was just sounding off, and when the Marine got off to get a cold drink at the next stop, I thought nothing of it. When I awoke from a short nap, a few miles later, I noticed that the long-hairs were gone. I asked my friend what happened. "Nothing much," he said, "I just persuaded them to wait for another bus."

My friend was probably a religious bigot and a xenophobe, but while I and the liberal college students were enjoying ourselves, he was off defending the honor of our country. He knew it was a war designed by the upper classes and fought by the lower classes, but he didn't resent it. He knew I was a middle-class college student and probably not too different from the "peace queers" that had spit on him, but he didn't resent that either. For several days, we were together virtually every minute, but he was nothing but kind and scrupulously considerate. He was the sort of decent, tough man our ancestors were, and he is worth more than all the high-minded students and intellectuals whom Richard Daley in his infinite wisdom locked up in a Chicago jail in 1968. However many second or third thoughts they might have, the unrepentant radicals don't have to apologize to me: they have to apologize to him.

LIBERAL ARTS

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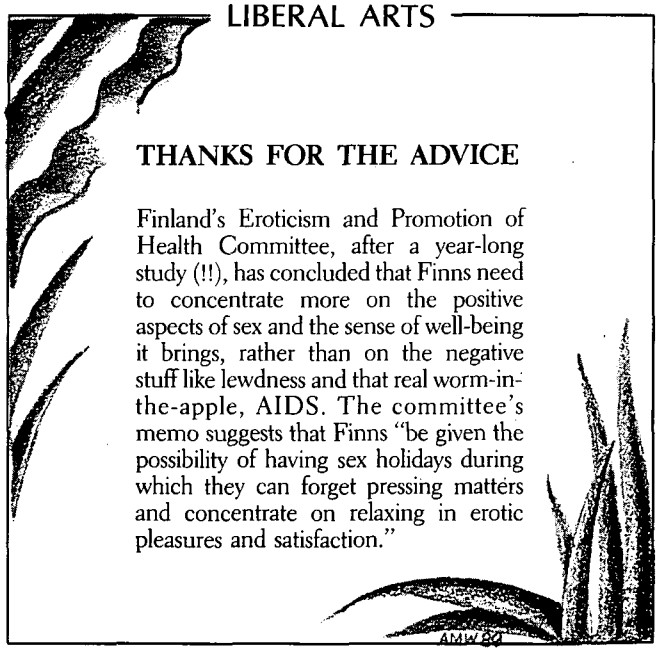
Finland's Eroticism and Promotion of Health Committee, after a year-long study (!!), has concluded that Finns need to concentrate more on the positive aspects of sex and the sense of well-being it brings, rather than on the negative stuff like lewdness and that real worm-in-the-apple, AIDS. The committee's memo suggests that Finns "be given the possibility of having sex holidays during which they can forget pressing matters and concentrate on relaxing in erotic pleasures and satisfaction."



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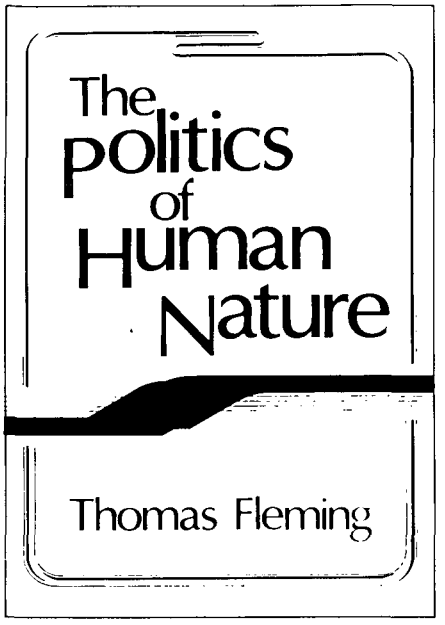

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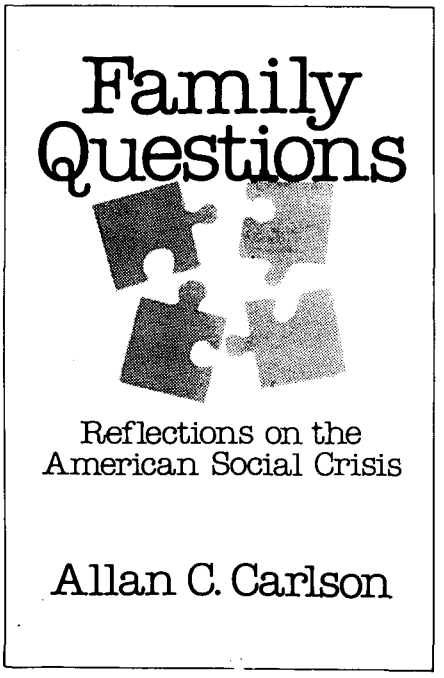

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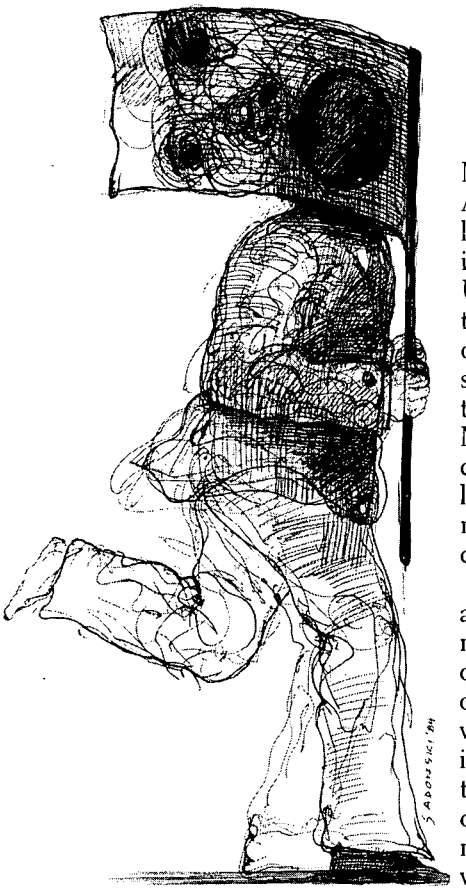
Liberalism: Collectivist and Conservative

by Edward Shils



I never exchanged a word with Richard Weaver. I knew him because he was a figure at the University of Chicago. I heard that he was a teacher who expected his students to meet a high standard of intellectual probity and rigor; I think that he expected the same of his colleagues. I was told, with a mixture of admiration and resentment, that he was not a member of any of the ruling parties at the college in the years in which he taught there.

To me, when I occasionally passed him on the campus or on 57th Street, he looked the part. He looked quietly and concentratedly independent; not bellicose, but determined to follow the path that he thought right. The path he thought right was not one that was plucked out of the air; it was one that had been taken deliberately and adhered to with purposeful tenacity. It was not easy. At that time there was a certain enthusiastic mateyness among the teachers of the humanities in the college at the University of Chicago. They were ebulliently confident that they had the protection of Robert Hutchins and Richard McKeon. There was much optimism in the United States at that time and they shared in it. Although they knew nothing of economics and little of politics, I think that they were generally devotees of the New Deal. Those who did not agree with them were ostracized as "reactionaries." That was Richard Weaver's situation.

Among collectivist liberal intellectuals, the University of Chicago now has a reputation for being a nest of "right wingers." Of course, the imputation is untrue. The fact that it has that reputation may be traced to the appearance and rootedness there of a strong tradition of genuine liberalism —individualistic or constitutional or conservative—from the time of J. Lawrence Laughlin and especially of Frank Knight, and since then contained in the outlook shared by Milton Friedman, George Stigler, and Allen Wallis. This kind of genuine liberalism at an American university is scarcely to be found outside the University of Chicago, and even at the University of Chicago is espoused only by a minority of the teaching staff, even among the social scientists who ought to know better. Most of the social scientists are collectivist liberals—the kinds of liberals who made off with the good name of liberalism and brought it into disrepute.

If, even now, when collectivist liberalism, social democracy, and communism are on the defensive, this kind of thoughtful distrust of the power of the state and of the omniscient wisdom of politicians and civil servants is to be found only in a minority of the senior members of the University of Chicago, they were a much smaller minority in the 1940's and 1950's when Richard Weaver taught there. Collectivist liberalism was then at the height of its pride and it required much firmness of character and deep seriousness to stand out in opposition to it. Richard Weaver had that seriousness of demeanor and outlook.

Seriousness is not gloominess. It is not dullness. It is not cheerlessness. To be serious is to take serious things in the way in which they ought to be taken. Foremost among the serious things are religion, the family, human life itself, the national society—i.e., the country and the traditions of the civilization we have inherited with its works of intellect, imagination, and morality. They include the discovery of truth and its protection. Serious things include the state of one's society and one's civilization. They also include the difficulties of human existence that reason alone and scientific knowledge cannot cure. All these things have to be given the weight that their central position in human existence entitles them to.

Seriousness is the mood and state of mind appropriate to the appreciation of serious things. Seriousness is not the only response to serious things: one other major response is frivolity or lightheartedness. Another is shoulder-shrugging

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or blind indifference. Still another is respect only in demeanor; it is not too far from philistinism, which is the appearance of seriousness without thought, without genuine appreciation.

Frivolity has in the 20th century become a plague of Western societies; and not least of contemporary American society. Of course, many of the greatest achievements of our Western societies and of the United States in particular have fostered this frivolity. The technological and economic progress that have made life easier, have obscured our grasp of the fundamental difficulties of human existence. The admirable progress of scientific knowledge and of medical science have made us think that there are no insoluble problems. Nothing is thought to be beyond the powers of the ratiocinative mind, provided with sufficient powers to realize its aspirations. The progress of science, it is thought, will release us from moral obligation and moral dilemmas. The reverence for human life has become fainter. Frivolity in the face of serious things: that is the charge that I make against collectivist liberalism.

It is perhaps frivolous to attempt to be serious on an occasion like this. I might end up by being no better than boring. But I am going to take the chance. I am going to try to clarify the idea of liberalism.

I will begin by saying that a liberal is one who appreciates liberty—or freedom. (I use the two words "liberty" and "freedom" interchangeably.) He is one who appreciates liberty not just for himself but for his fellow-countrymen and for human beings generally. He is a believer in the merit of a free society, a social order of free institutions and of free individuals. A liberal is one who supports the traditional liberal values of the rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of association, representation, and petition; the freedom of religious belief and the separation of church and state; freedom of intellectual expression; equality of opportunity and "the career open to talents" or rewards commensurate with achievement; and freedom of political expression. (The American Civil Liberties Union was once such a liberal organization which supported these public liberties before it went off the deep end by taking up the causes of antinomianism and collectivist liberalism.)

I think that by and large those who are called "liberals" nowadays in the press and in political discourse are in fact collectivist liberals. These collectivist liberals have preempted the term "liberalism" and given it a bad name. But there is another kind of liberalism: older, more distinguished in its intellectual ancestry, and more consistent. I would call it individualist constitutional or conservative liberalism.

This is the kind of liberalism that prevailed in Great Britain and in France in the first part of the 19th century. It had many great exponents, each somewhat different from the others, but all of them incontestably liberals—from Adam Smith through Bentham, James Mill, George Grote, and John Stuart Mill for a part of his career (later he veered off to become one of the fathers of collectivist liberalism). Tocqueville was its greatest figure in France, where its most recent voices have been Raymond Aron and on a slightly lower level Bertrand de Jouvenel. Of those now living its greatest representatives are Friedrich von Hayek and Karl Popper.

In the great tradition of liberalism from Locke (and Hobbes) through Adam Smith, and to Frank Knight and his followers Milton Friedman and George Stigler, liberalism placed as high a value on the private ownership of property and on private business enterprise as it did on any other institutions of a free society.

This individualistic or constitutional or conservative liberalism has a far more illustrious intellectual history than has collectivist liberalism. Apart from John Stuart Mill and John Maynard Keynes, I think that collectivist liberalism has few notable intellectual figures. Nevertheless, at present, in the intellectual world and in the universities in the United States and Europe, they far outnumber the genuine liberals. But they are now on the defensive.

They are on the defensive because of the failure of communism in every country in which it has been established, and of social democracy in most of the countries in which it has been gradually introduced, most notably in Great Britain and France.

These observations lead to a closer examination of collectivist liberalism. Collectivist liberalism parted from the great tradition of individualistic constitutional and conservative liberalism when some liberals decided that the private ownership of property, the freedom of private property, was dispensable. Collectivist liberals ceased to be liberals and became collectivists when they affirmed their belief in the omnicompetence, omniscience, omniprovidence of governmental and political authority. They have tended to believe that the state and its political leaders are capable of unfailingly wise, efficient, and just action in economic life and in education—and to that extent they have ceased to be liberals. They tend to think that the public liberties that they espouse, such as the freedom of the press, of assembly, and of association, etc., should be used to urge government—politicians and bureaucrats and the judiciary as well—to extend their activities rather than to hold them

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The spectrum of political ideas is not a one-dimensional one, with "left" at one end and "right" at the other. It is a complex constellation of many dimensions.

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in check. The critical function of public liberties is seen by collectivist liberals to be, not the limitation in the powers of government, but rather its extension, so as to enable it to "solve" all social problems, to realize and fulfill its obligation to cure every deficiency of human life. Collectivist liberals believe that this omnicompetence lies within the capacities of government. All that has to be done—by public pressure—is to overcome private, "vested" interests, traditional beliefs, and their reactionary resistance to progress. Then, by the use of rational thought and social science, definitive solutions will be found for all the problems of life and society.

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Integral genuine liberalism is distrustful of the omnicompetence and omniscience of governments. More fundamental even than that is the recognition that a good society is one made up of numerous independent institutions, pursuing diverse objectives, or not pursuing any objective at all, but being their own justification for existence. I think here above all of the family, churches, universities, clubs, and voluntary associations. Each has its own rationale and own tasks which cannot be performed by government.

The tradition of liberalism, which is older than collectivist liberalism, acknowledges the centrality of the family, which in turn requires respect for authority within the family. It acknowledges the fundamental importance of the autonomy of ecclesiastical and educational institutions. It appreciates respect for law and for the authority that enacts and enforces law. It is in favor of "law and order"; it knows that society will disintegrate without it and it knows that individual and institutional freedom cannot exist without law and order. Collectivist liberalism denies religious authority, except when it puts religious faith aside and is active in progressive political causes. Genuine liberalism acknowledges the obligations to one's country; collectivist liberalism is contemptuous of patriotism. Conservative liberalism believes that tradition has a presumptive claim to respect. Collectivist liberals think that traditions of moral life and order are superstitions that should be replaced by "moral education" in which every person decides for himself what is right.

LIBERAL ARTS

JUST THINK HOW MUCH HUME WOULD HAVE LIKED JERRY RUBIN

There is a Set of Men lately sprung up amongst us, who endeavour to distinguish themselves by ridiculing every Thing, that has hitherto appear'd sacred and venerable in the Eyes of Mankind. Reason, Sobriety, Honour, Friendship, Marriage, are the perpetual Subjects of their insipid Raillery: And even public Spirit, and a Regard to our Country, are treated as chimerical and romantic. Were the Schemes of these Anti-reformers to take Place, all the Bonds of Society must be broke, to make Way for the Indulgence of a licentious Mirth and Gaiety: The Companion of our drunken Frollics must be prefer'd to a Friend or Brother: Dissolute Prodigality must be supply'd at the Expence of every Thing valuable, either in public or private: And Men shall have so little Regard to any Thing beyond themselves, that, at last, a free Constitution of Government must become a Scheme perfectly impracticable among Mankind, and must degenerate into one universal System of Fraud and Corruption.

—from "Of Moral Prejudice" by David Hume

What is the proper name for this genuine liberalism? It is not conservatism of the old type that believes in the unity of church and state. It is not conservatism of the type that affirms the right of the great hereditary landowners to rule over society. It is not monarchist, except in countries that have been monarchical for a long time. Should it be called "individualist liberalism"? Perhaps, except that genuine liberalism thinks that individualism should be qualified in the face of familial obligations, religious authority, the need for social order, and the obligations of nationality and patriotism. Should it be called conservative liberalism? That would not be wrong. It would do justice to the individualism of classical liberalism and our devotion to public liberties and it would also do justice to its high evaluation of social order and law-abidingness, to its respect for religious traditions. It would also do justice to an interpretation of freedom that enables us to avoid the antinomianism—the hatred of law and self-restraint—to which collectivist liberalism is so sympathetic.

Yet we must be circumspect about the use of the word "conservative" and above all with the repulsive neologism, coined "neoconservatism" or "neocons," by the collectivist liberals who wish to disparage the resurgence of good sense, genuine liberalism, and reasonable conservatism in the past several decades.

Conservatism has got a very bad name in the United States because of the long dominion in intellectual circles of a polemical collectivist liberalism. To adapt the observation of Mr. Dooley about the loyalty of the Democrats of the 22nd ward to the Democratic Party, that they would sooner die than be buried by a Republican undertaker, so American intellectuals in the main have been so loyal to the principle of collectivist liberalism that they would sooner die than be buried by a conservative undertaker.

The spectrum of political ideas is not a one-dimensional one, with "left" at one end and "right" at the other. It is a complex constellation of many dimensions. Attachment to existing institutions and practices as such is not conservatism, as we can see in the Soviet Union, and the desire to change them, as again we can see in the Soviet Union, is far from liberalism. Nor does a desire to destroy the existing institutions of a free society equal liberalism—although, as the inglorious events of the late 1960's show, many persons who called themselves and still call themselves liberals give their blessings and their resources to persons who wish to destroy the institutions of a free society.

To allow the collectivist liberals to monopolize the name of liberalism permits them to obscure but their own collectivism, and it also permits them to deny the attachment of their more conservative adversaries—ourselves—to public liberties. Collectivist liberalism is very far from the traditions of individualistic, conservative, or constitutional liberalism, which inherits the tradition of Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, Frank Knight, Raymond Aron, and Professors Hayek and Popper.

I began these remarks by emphasizing that one could be serious like Richard Weaver without being boring. I fear that I have shown that seriousness can be boring and that it might also miscarry into frivolity as well. I thank you for your indulgence.

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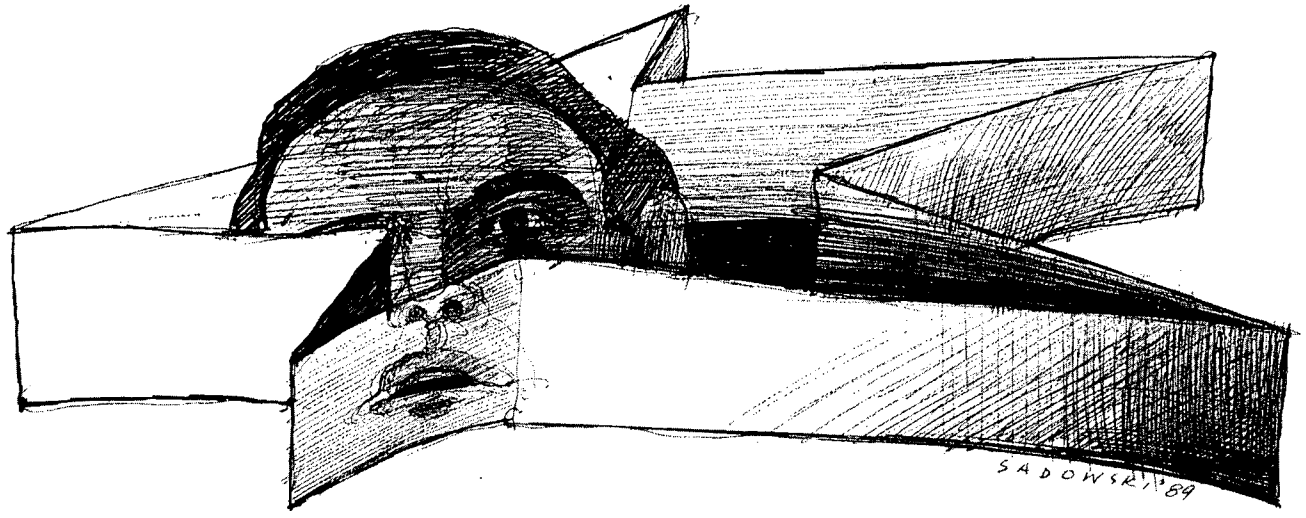
Buchenwald's Second Life

by George Watson



Even in an age of *glasnost*, hardly anyone troubles to recall that when the Soviet Union occupied East Germany in 1945 it kept two Nazi concentration camps in full use for nearly five years, till February 1950, and at their old task of death.

Soviet Buchenwald comes as a surprise, and that surprise is perhaps a tribute to the power of propaganda in general and of Soviet censorship in particular. Imagine the outcry if any Western nation had kept a single Nazi camp in use, for more than a few weeks—an American Dachau, perhaps, or a British Belsen; picture the indignation it would arouse in the Western world, the shame Western man to this day would be called upon to feel, the anguish of the survivors and the friends of the dead. Censorship works, it is worth remembering, and not least the state censorship of the socialist world. If it does not kill the truth, it can certainly smother it for years. When I stood in Buchenwald camp recently, on a lecturing visit to East Germany, I had to evoke not one killing field but two: a Nazi camp that lasted for eight years, from 1937 till its liberation by American troops in the spring of 1945; and the camp the Soviets ran there—one of about a dozen they maintained in the conquered German lands—after certain territories the Red Army had not liberated were handed over by Allied agreement.

Such a visit is doubly sobering. Buchenwald stands in thick woods on a hilltop in East Germany some four miles above Weimar, an idyllic little town set in the Thuringian hills where Goethe's house, and Schiller's, are still shown to eager tourists. The camp is invisible from below, and always was, being densely surrounded by trees, except that the Soviets in 1958 built a tall stone bell tower to commemorate their dead. It was not, to speak relatively in Nazi terms, a death camp. Of the quarter of a million prisoners held there over eight years—men and women of many nationalities—about a quarter are thought to have died, or some 65,000. For two years, from April 1943, their number included Léon Blum, a former French premier held as hostage in isolation and in superior conditions with his third wife, Janot, who heroically volunteered to join him there from Paris and married him in the camp. Even on a warm summer day the place seems bleak and sunless, as if conscious of its own infamy, though visitors are a normal and daily event, including parties of schoolchildren. Outside the wire, nowadays, there is even a hotel among the trees.

What remains of the camp, in its third life, is a perimeter fence, once electrified, which still stands entire surrounding many acres of waste ground—concrete posts about 12 feet high carrying miles of barbed wire. The gateway, too, is still in place, with its ironwork lettering "Jedem das Seine"—to each his own; so is the railhead just outside the gate, built by forced labor during the war. But only the administrative block still stands as a building, apart from the guardhouse, and it is now used as an exhibition center. The rest calls for some imagination. The parliamentary delegation that Winston Churchill sent as prime minister in April 1945 speaks in its report of verminous huts without windows, four-tiered with bunks, and only recently holding 80,000 prisoners. This is where Ilse Koch, wife of the Nazi commandant, collected articles made of human skin, including a famous lampshade. This is where survivors, half

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naked skeletons walking as if on stilts, told the British delegation that they had heard of camps further east where conditions were still worse, and paid tribute to the precision of RAF bombing, which (they said) had killed about 200 Nazis, 400 prisoners, and 150 Nazi women residing nearby.

The huts themselves, which once numbered over 50, have now been razed, leaving only concrete foundations marked with information about those who lived in them, or ceased to live. The crematorium, too, is marked on the ground. There were no gas chambers at Buchenwald, and killing was mainly by shooting or hanging. But the central area has been laid waste. Essentially, as it stands today, Buchenwald is a huge empty space surrounded by wire.

The exhibition is instructive, in a misleading sort of way, and remarkable for its effrontery. A film shows something of Nazism, as you would expect—but much too about American atrocities, real or alleged, in Vietnam. Though the exhibition tells the story of the rise of Hitler, there is no word of the Hitler-Soviet pact of 1939-41—a topic still largely taboo east of the Iron Curtain, even after Gorbachev's visit to Poland in July 1988, a nation that the pact dismembered—and nothing about the genocidal theories of Marx and Engels where Hitler probably found in print the idea for his Final Solution. Still less is there any hint that Buchenwald, along with Sachsenhausen and other camps in former German lands, were used for years by the Soviets after 1945 for a similar purpose. It is admitted that the camp was liberated by the US and not by the Red Army. But the American liberators are reviled for having failed to support "the only consistent resistance among the prisoners," which means that they did not promptly hand over the camp to its Communist underground. The hero of the display is Ernst Thälmann, leader of the German Communist Party, though the truth is that he was never a prisoner here, having been brought in one morning in August 1944 to be shot. Nazis are not called that; still less are they called National Socialists, since socialism is officially a sacred name throughout eastern Europe, and its moral authority is not to be sullied or questioned. So, as elsewhere in East Germany, they are called fascists—a name they never used.

Léon Blum has left a detailed account of life and death inside Nazi Buchenwald during the last two years of world war. Shortly after his liberation, in an article called "The Last Month," he described his careful segregation in the camp from the thousands of prisoners who, as he at first failed to guess, were dying around him. A camp was a strictly compartmentalized organism, and you could spend months, even years in one without knowing its full purpose. The hut Blum shared with his wife was on the edge of the officers' quarters: Blum scarcely left it for two years, and never wandered into the camp at large; and no one entered it but the SS. On a rare visit to the dentist, he would be taken by car as a privileged prisoner, talk to no one in the hospital and return in equal solitude. The huts for special prisoners were continuously patrolled by SS men with dogs and machine guns, some of them always to be seen between the huts and the perimeter fence, night and day, and the Blums survived in their tiny cabin as if in a tomb. In fact there were old friends in neighboring huts of whose very existence they remained unaware for nearly a year.

That segregation, as Blum insists, explains his ignorance of what the camp was largely for. The first hint, he tells, was

> the strange smell which we often had at evening through the open windows, enveloping us all night long when the wind persisted in the same direction. It was the smell of the crematorium.

Though there was a lot of death at Buchenwald, "we never knew exactly what one died of, or how one died." The Blums were to understand better in August 1944 when, after an American bombing raid on the camp, ordinary prisoners were brought in to clear up the mess. Blum's description is unforgettable:

> their faces gaunt, hollow and furrowed, their bodies floating under striped smocks, their feet bare inside their wooden clogs . . . They passed us harnessed like draft animals to a cart loaded with rocks and sands; or in long lines, their shoulders bent under a long tree trunk, like captives in some Egyptian or Assyrian frieze.

The Blums contrived to exchange a few words with French and Belgian prisoners, learning about friends in the camp, and realizing from their talk how vastly different the life of ordinary prisoners was from their own. And they heard, too, of even worse sectors elsewhere, reserved for Russians, Poles, and Jews. But it is astonishing to record that it was only after his liberation, when he heard the testimony of other survivors, that the great Léon Blum—the most famous of all residents of Buchenwald in its first stage, and a resident there for nearly two years—realized that he had lived in a charnel house.

Blum's intuition that Nazi cruelty must be infectious was to prove true.

"You are already conquerors in this sense," he wrote bitterly after the war of his Nazi captors. "You have succeeded in communicating to the world your cruelty and your hatred." The world, he predicted, would respond, and it did—"waging war like you, in exasperated rage." Blum trembled at the thought, in his liberty, and with reason. For

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Soviet Buchenwald was in all likelihood a deadlier place than the Nazi camp, in the sense that a higher proportion of its prisoners died. But they died not quickly, by shooting and hanging, but by starvation and above all disease, tuberculosis being the greatest of all killers.

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though Buchenwald in its second life, under the Russians, may have killed only 13,000 prisoners, they represented over a third of the camp population of those years, or far more than the proportion of Nazi dead. It is a curious detail of the British parliamentary report of 1945 that the prisoner who had been in charge of cremating bodies in the Nazi

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period was a thirty-year-old Berlin Communist called Kurt Faulhaber, who told them that no Jewish prisoner would have been allowed to hold a post as privileged as his. As Hitler remarked during the war to Albert Speer, Communists were to be trusted, in the Nazi system, and allowed responsibilities.

To learn of Buchenwald's second life I had to travel west, since the matter is seldom spoken of, and never written about, in East Germany. In 1948 a Group Against Inhumanity was set up in West Berlin by survivors of Soviet Buchenwald, which in the event was to last from August 1945 down to February 1950, and their publications tell a revealing story of contrasts in totalitarian styles.

Soviet Buchenwald was in all likelihood a deadlier place than the Nazi camp, in the sense that a higher proportion of its prisoners died. But they died not quickly, by shooting and hanging, but by starvation and above all disease, tuberculosis being the greatest of all killers. Soviet Buchenwald was preeminently a place of chaos and neglect, and far unlike the military precision of its former self. A prisoner seldom even saw a Russian soldier, unless in the distance on one of the control towers preserved from Nazi times, or at one of the endless parades that made up camp life. Even the robbing of prisoners had already occurred before arrival, so that they were forced to survive in the camp with the few garments they had managed to keep, the best having been seized by Red Army soldiers at the moment of arrest. There were no prisoners' uniforms now, little sense of order, and few exits by the bullet or the noose. If Nazi cruelty was active, Communist was passive. One died, after 1945, unregarded and by sheer inadvertance.

Prisoners included anyone known to have a history of dissent or an instinct for free debate, and the death toll was huge. One survivor reports that, of the 29 in his group, only 5 survived to be released in 1948. The daily diet amounted to 800-900 calories; enough to sustain life if you sit or lie, but not if you move. Only 10 percent of the prisoners worked, within the electrified perimeter fence once built by the Nazis; the rest were confined, parades apart, to crowded barracks. The NKVD inherited from the Nazis 15 two-storied stone barracks and 32 one-storied barracks, and the third and more who died at their hands were buried in mass graves near the camp. Daily parades took two hours, during which time prisoners were forced to stand or march. It was against the rules to die inside the barracks, and prisoners were forced to carry dying comrades to a sick bay, once they were declared unfit by Soviet doctors, where they received no treatment and were left to their fate. One survivor speaks of faces like masks. As they were taken out, companions seized their spoons and their garments as objects too precious to lose.

That the Soviets were running concentration camps in their zone of Germany was public knowledge in postwar years, though it is a fact now widely forgotten. There were occasional protests, at the time, in the West. An AFL official, for example, speaking on behalf of American labor, demanded that the United States should refuse to treat with the Soviet Union for so long as Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen were kept at their old task; and rumors of his speech, brought to Soviet Buchenwald by a new prisoner, gave the inmates a breath of hope. Thomas Mann's record is less heroic. A resident by then of California, he revisited his native Germany for the first time in 16 years in July and August 1949, including Weimar in the Russian zone, and was urged by the Group Against Inhumanity to ask permission to visit the Buchenwald camp. He declined to ask; and in an article in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (July 28, 1949) he pleaded that his visit to Weimar was to commemorate the bicentenary of Goethe's birth and to receive the Goethe prize there: "To make demands . . . that the German officials inviting me cannot fulfill is out of the question, and the society making the request knows that as well as I." Like the first Buchenwald, as he rightly guessed, the second was not for tourists. Mann breakfasted with the Soviet commander in Weimar, General Tulpanov, gave a speech at the National Theater there, and took his prize; but he did not go up the hill. Plainly the Soviet use of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen was not a secret after 1945: in fact the death in Sachsenhausen of Heinrich George, a famous actor, was widely reported. The world has simply chosen to forget.

Whether it now chooses to remember is a question entirely for us. Beyond the Iron Curtain such decisions are not for individuals but for governments, but even there the atmosphere may now be clearing. Poles are allowed to hint, even occasionally to proclaim in print, that the massacres at Katyn, near Smolensk, of some five thousand Polish officers in April 1940 was a Soviet and not a Nazi atrocity. Since the party conference in Moscow in June 1988, crimes like the starvation of the Ukraine are publicly admitted even inside the Soviet Union. There is seldom a breath of public admission that the Soviet Union was Hitler's ally, however, for two years after August 1939; or that with the fall of France in May 1940 Stalin willingly supplied Hitler with materials for his planned invasion of England and, a year later, for his actual invasion of the Soviet Union; or that after 1945 the Soviets used some of the Nazi camps, year after year, to an even deadlier effect than the Nazis.

Some day, perhaps, if *glasnost* spreads, such matters will be spoken of, even written about, in eastern Europe. And that, as they say, will be the day. ◇

LIBERAL ARTS

BELLOC SAW THE FUTURE IN 1913

The legislator says, for instance, "You may pluck roses; but as I notice that you sometimes scratch yourself, I will put you in prison unless you cut them with scissors at least 122 millimeters long, and I will appoint one thousand inspectors to go round the country seeing whether the law is observed. My brother-in-law shall be at the head of the department at £2,000 a year.

—*from* The Servile State
by Hilaire Belloc

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The Zealot Enters His Second Childhood

by Tom Murray

He had carried this barrier across his years,
An iron curtain over life's frontiers.

And always beyond the wall
Was the multiplying past,
The last dead self and the self before the last,
The innumerable all,
His cumulative kin,
The sometime guests he had housed within the skin.

And invisibly, whenever he uttered,
Bands had blared and flags had fluttered:
"To the glory of God above,"
"The world's well lost for love,"
"Let justice be done," "This happy breed,"
"To each according to his need."

But now his backward glance
Can not one ghost renew.
No need to darken their advance.
Open the gates. They will not now come through.

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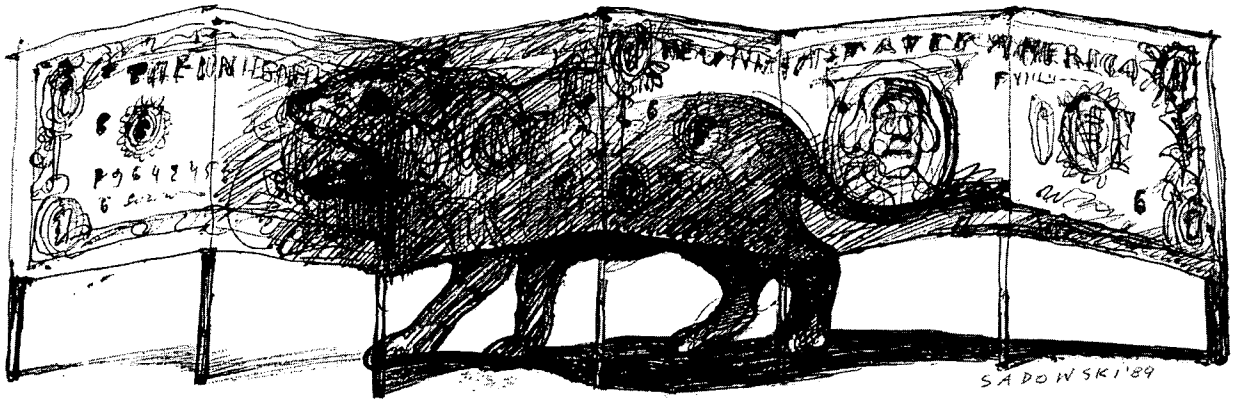

The Straight and Narrow

by Timothy Ashby

"Lessons are not given, they are taken."
—Cesare Pavese

The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World
by Hernando de Soto
New York: Harper & Row; 261 pp., $22.95

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Although subtitled *The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, Hernando de Soto's *The Other Path* is as much revelatory as revolutionary. For one who has grappled with the problems of Third World development, seeking to define and articulate a certain truth sensed to be hidden beneath the muck of pseudoscientific political economic theory, *The Other Path* is a profoundly refreshing exposition of reality. But perhaps of greater importance, it is a moving testament to the indomitable spirit of the common man.

While *The Other Path* is a worthy account of the grass-roots entrepreneurs of Peru, it could just as easily be a study of the "black market" or informal economic sector anywhere in the world. Immense underground economies exist in countries as diverse as the Soviet Union, Italy, and Nigeria—places where, de Soto says, "underdevelopment was not a problem of people but of the system." In a general sense, the problem in Peru as elsewhere is the state, or, more specifically, an archaic and unbelievably byzantine legal system crafted to protect the interests of the elite and punish those seeking upward mobility by making them outlaws. The black market is therefore a natural means of remedying an unnatural denial of human aspirations.

Hernando de Soto is a revolutionary. His work is sprinkled with the terminology one associates with Third World radicalism, from "the path to liberation" to "the country's structures must be transformed." Yet de Soto is a revolutionary not of the left or of the right but truly of the people. Cognizant of the false appeals to the poor's frustration made by Marxist-Leninists, he seeks liberation through economic empowerment rather than bloody insurrection. The very title of his book is a symbol of his opposition to communism, for *The Other Path* is offered as the only viable alternative to the Shining Path, Peru's burgeoning Marxist guerrilla movement. He warns that "the more the forces of change are repressed and the greater the level of unrest, the more likely it is that professional revolutionaries will seize power and impose totalitarian systems."

De Soto's indictment of Marxism-Leninism is equaled by his attack on what he calls "Mercantilism." Although the author's definition of mercantilism differs somewhat from mine (I question whether "the raison d'etre of the mercantilist state was to redistribute wealth according to its fiscal and political interests"), it nevertheless serves as an approximate model for modern Peru and other statist political economies. De Soto is correct in stating that "Westerners often do not realize that their Latin American

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counterparts function in economies governed by politics rather than markets." This is the primary failing of development "specialists" in North America and Europe, who assume that a democratic or rightist authoritarian regime in the developing world automatically equates to a modern market economy.

Some of the most pro-US regimes, most notably that of the former Somoza government of Nicaragua, have also been highly statist. Nicaragua comes to mind when de Soto says "the traditional left also confuses the two systems [free market and mercantilist], but they conclude that, although private ownership of the means of production predominates, the development the country needs has not been achieved, proving that capitalism has failed and that a collectivist model is needed."

Bilateral economic assistance given to a fragile young democracy in Latin America or elsewhere can prove counterproductive unless the regime is actively pursuing market-oriented structural reforms, for an unwillingness to unravel the barbed wire shroud of statism ultimately discredits the concept of development via a formal private sector.

Third World Marxists continually seek "evidence" to use in repudiating the free market model so that a country can be electorally kicked back onto the statist path. The most glaring recent example of this is Ecuador, where a tragic combination of natural disasters and falling oil prices, coupled with an inability to retract the state's tentacles, cast a dark shadow over the free market policies of former President Leon Febres Cordero and led to a decisive leftist victory in the last national elections.

De Soto's development theories do not easily fit into an ideological matrix. Whereas his strongest advocates in the United States have been conservatives or libertarians, in Latin America he is generally viewed as a threat by the old conservative elites while winning a surprising degree of support from the "soft" left. The Institute for Liberty and Democracy, de Soto's Lima-based think tank, is funded by the US Agency for International Development (AID), the John M. Olin Foundation, and other organizations identified with the Reagan and Bush administrations. Yet the 40 full-time economists, lawyers, and engineers employed by the institute would tend to identify themselves as politically left-wing. De Soto explains this seeming contradiction by saying that American conservatives are actually classical liberals and philosophical descendants of revolutionaries such as Jefferson and Franklin, whereas the Peruvian right continues in the tradition of Francisco Pizarro! As I number among my friends several thoughtful Peruvian conservatives, I find this characterization unfair, and wonder whether such rhetoric impedes de Soto's efforts to build bridges to Peru's political establishment. De Soto must know that revolutions are, in practice, usually made from the top down rather than the bottom up.

De Soto claims that his institute's staff, along with thousands of other Latin American intellectuals, had turned to the left out of concern for the poor rather than because they had been converted by the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Offering the free market as the best means of solving the problems of underdevelopment, the author has induced many of these would-be (or perhaps more aptly, armchair) revolutionaries to tread his "Other Path." Now, de Soto says, not a single one of his staff "believes that state control of the economy is the panacea for injustice and backwardness."

It is true that many who count themselves among the social democratic left of Latin America and the Caribbean have been affected by de Soto's ideas, with profound implications for the future course of economic and political development in this region of such importance to the United States. I was acquainted with Jamaica's Michael Manley for some years before his reassumption of power earlier this year, during which time I had given him books and articles by and about de Soto and privatization guru Stuart Butler. At a recent meeting with US Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, Prime Minister Manley told me that these materials had played a significant role in his decision to continue the privatization policies of his predecessor Edward Seaga, and that he intended to go further by finding ways of bringing Jamaica's famous parallel marketeers, the "Higglers," into the formal economy.

Therein lies the crucial dilemma posed by the concluding chapter of *The Other Path* — how to reform the unbelievably complicated and fiercely resistant macroeconomic structures of the developing world without precipitating the type of bloody anarchy that convulsed Venezuela in the early part of 1989. De Soto recommends that "the formals and the informals should be integrated into a single economic and legal system which outlaws discrimination so that the entire population can make full use of its creative energies." While he acknowledges the need for "appropriate" macroeconomic policies and corresponding investments, I believe he errs somewhat by stressing that the adoption of microeconomic measures is "the most important element."

Both are equally important to a country's development, yet microeconomic reforms can never be addressed unless grander policy issues such as trade, foreign investment, debt, and security are responsibly dealt with. Alan Woods, head of US AID, seems to agree, saying in his recent report on US foreign assistance initiatives that "the same economic and development policies that benefit developing nations as a whole also benefit individuals . . . development means choice; the greater the range of choice, the greater the degree of development."

With the exception of countries such as Mexico and Bolivia, which are bravely adopting structural adjustments at great political risk to the incumbent parties, macroeconomic reforms have been slow at best and an outright sham in some cases. Unfortunately, most Third World governments respond only to strong *external* pressure to privatize or reduce trade barriers. While de Soto and his supporters have made notable gains in revamping aspects of Peru's byzantine legal system, and have certainly caught the attention of the government, they appear powerless to halt the country's precipitous economic decline that has resulted from the Garcia regime's maladroit interventionism.

The World Bank has disbursed over $4 billion since 1980 to help Third World countries make "the necessary institutional changes in government programs and policies to modify the economy's structure." Yet the World Bank itself concluded that its structural

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adjustment programs and those of other institutions had largely failed. The reason, according to the International Monetary Fund's publication *Finances and Development*, was that recipient governments "were not adequately persuaded."

This is nothing more than a multilateral development banker's way of saying that the big lenders and donors lacked the political will to demand reforms in exchange for cash and credits. After all, structural adjustment funds are designed to help cushion countries against the shocks to political and social systems caused by a free market reorientation of economic policy. Despite rhetorical support for structural and sectoral reforms, many recipient countries simply take the money and run, leaving the multilateral institutions wringing their hands.

Hernando de Soto's *Other Path* is really the only path to economic rejuvenation in the developing world, yet his recommendations can only become reality when the United States and other sources of aid demonstrate that their patience has ended for those nations that pay only lip service to economic reform. In an era when our own fiscal resources are shrinking, our development assistance policy should be simple and direct: reward those who are willing to help themselves, penalize those who don't. Unfettered economies are the only solution to long-term stability, and the only secure foundation for a pluralist political system. ◇

Who'll Buy My Lifetime?

by Tom Murray

At about seventeen or above—
Age for Beethoven's Fifth or first love—
His friend and idol told him, starry-eyed,
"The world, believe me, is flat"
And, having said so, died.

And that for him was that.
His faith thereafter canvassed sixty years
Of doors. The accustomed street
Looked up at his outstretched pamphlets
And planted corns on his feet.
On umpteen tubs he thumped his fears
For mankind's safety. On the sinister
Dooms that waited on unbelief
He wrote to both Pope and Prime Minister.

And each day's passion had the same relief:
The lengthening climb to the grey-haired bed,
The reverenced photograph, the credo said,
"The world, I know, is flat". . . .

The pills and glass of water, then the steep
Drop headlong to embattled sleep.

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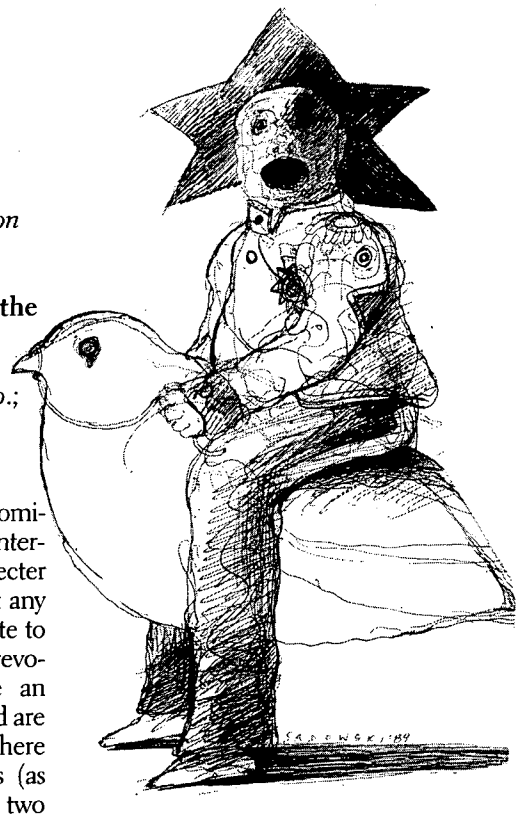
Soviet Strategy

by William R. Hawkins

"He crucified noble, he sacrificed mean,
He filled old ladies with kerosene.
While over the waters the papers cried
'The patriot fights for his countryside!'"
—Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of Boh da thone"

The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Warfare
by Richard H. Shultz Jr.
Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press; 283 pp., $25.95

Spetsnaz: The Inside Story of the Soviet Special Forces
by Viktor Suvorov
New York: W.W. Norton & Co.; 213 pp., $17.95



For 40 years two topics have dominated popular discussions of international conflict. The first is the specter of nuclear war and the danger that any US-Soviet confrontation will escalate to Armageddon. The second is that revolutions in the Third World are an inevitable part of modernization and are necessary to escape oppression. There has been a steady flow of serious (as well as polemical) work on these two topics, but the practical political effect of both has been to create an environment of self-deterrence on the part of American leaders. Fighting against a leftist revolution is considered futile, whereas involvement in a counterrevolution or conventional war against a Communist government risks a costly escalation.

Soviet strategists have come to different conclusions. They seldom fear that acting against a pro-Western government will lead to escalation. Indeed, since American leaders have rejected the idea of linkage, Moscow hardly even needs to worry about an increase in interest rates from American banks, let alone a nuclear crisis, in response to its military interventions (even Ronald Reagan in his "evil empire" days rescinded the grain embargo imposed on the Soviets for invading Afghanistan). And despite all the attention and money spent on nuclear weapons, no such weapons have been used since 1945. Yet large areas of the globe have changed hands, and millions have died in what has been a very violent period of warfare. As nuclear weapons are deemphasized in new arms control treaties and by the deployment of missile defense systems, the scope for conventional warfare will expand.

As to the myth of the guerrilla, the Soviets well know the inherent weakness of revolutionary groups. They never put much stock in the romantic notions of Ché and Mao. Throughout history, far more revolts have failed than succeeded. Those that have won owe their success more to the disintegration of the deposed regime than to their own efforts. Governments can mobilize far more power than rebels as long as their leaders can maintain the will to resist. Rebels can only inflict damage, not seize power, until the main forces of the regime are defeated. Rebels can seldom do this without foreign military support (Americans forget the money, weapons, troops, and ships provided to the colonists by France in the War of Independence—aid that escalated into an outright Great Power war). Usually the only force that can beat a government is another government. This weakness is an advantage to Moscow, because in a revolutionary situation, military aid becomes decisive, thus ensuring that pro-Soviet factions will emerge victorious.

Since the final phase of a revolutionary war is conventional, regardless of how many years of terrorist and guerrilla actions may have preceded it, there is a great advantage to the establishment of foreign bases to provide a sanctuary for rebels as they are trained and equipped for the final push, and to provide regular troops to intervene in support of the rebels at the decisive moment. Cuba provided the troops that reinforced the pro-Soviet factions in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. North Vietnam carried the brunt of the war effort in Indochina after the decimation of the Vietcong in 1968. South Vietnam fell to 17 regular combat divisions with more tanks than the Germans had when they defeated France in 1940. In 1979 Cuba sent an "international brigade" to support the Sandinistas not only against the Somoza regime, but also against rival revolutionary factions. From these satraps, new wars have been launched in southern Africa, southeast Asia, and Central America. The PLO gained a base area with the disintegra-

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tion of Lebanon, and is now pushing for another on the West Bank.

Richard H. Shultz Jr., of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, examines Soviet strategy based on four case studies: Vietnam, the PLO, Angola, and Nicaragua. From these he identifies patterns in Moscow's use of political (propaganda, front groups, international organizations) and military (training, advisors, arms shipments, and surrogate troops) measures.

Propaganda seeks to isolate the target regime from outside support while promoting the rebels as the only legitimate representatives of the people. The program of the rebels may vary, but the regime is always portrayed as a reactionary tool of the United States, regardless of the actual state of US relations with the target. Thus all propaganda serves to reinforce the main Soviet theme that the US is the principal evil in the world. Interestingly, this anti-American line works as well inside the US as outside. In Cuba, Iran, and Nicaragua, rebel success followed the termination of US support for the target regime.

Among the front groups, the World Peace Council plays a major role in every case. Front group propaganda is harsher in tone than Soviet efforts, reflecting its closer association with activists. The Soviets also use international conferences, the UN, and the Non-Aligned Movement (led by Cuba) to promote the legitimacy of the revolution. The UN has been particularly useful in the Middle East and Africa.

The Soviets are lavish in their supply of arms. Moscow will use covert methods until their propaganda has made the rebels sufficiently acceptable to provide direct supplies. World opinion allows the Soviets a high degree of deniability. Even weapons shipped through Cuba, North Vietnam, or Syria do not "prove" Soviet involvement. Training is provided in surrogate states by Soviet and East Bloc advisors, with selected cadres taken to the USSR itself. Political indoctrination is as important as military training. However, training foreign radicals does not guarantee a future commitment, since Moscow trains many terrorists simply as agents of disruption. They may never be able to seize power, but they can spread anarchy in the noncommunist world with a minimal investment of Soviet resources.

The Soviets also provide help in consolidating power in captured territory. East German and Bulgarian advisors specialize in the creation of secret police and internal security troops, while Soviet, Cuban, and Vietnamese advisors concentrate on mobilizing resources for a military buildup, turning the conquered nation into a base area for the next advance.

The hammer and anvil strategy evident in revolutionary war, where propaganda and terrorism weakens a target state until a final offensive is launched by heavily armed conventional forces, is also part of the Soviets' own plan for a general war. Viktor Suvorov is the pseudonym for a former Red Army intelligence officer who defected to the West. As a member of the GRU, Suvorov was involved in the training of elite *Spetsnaz* troops and the formation of plans for their use. It is *Spetsnaz* that will play the role of guerrillas, striking deep behind the lines in Europe and America in the days and hours before the Soviets unleash their tank armies in a blitzkrieg across the North German plain.

The Soviets made extensive use of partisan bands behind German lines in World War II to make the kind of theater interdiction attacks that the US used airpower to perform. When NATO introduced nuclear weapons to counter the larger Warsaw Pact armies, *Spetsnaz* was created as a force that could destroy nuclear weapon storage areas and launch sites by surprise attack.

The list of targets has grown as *Spetsnaz* has grown. Ports and naval bases, railways and bridges, oil storage sites and pipelines (including those in Alaska), power plants and communications centers are obvious targets. So are political leaders, both those in power and among the opposition — anyone who could provide legitimate national leadership. Key military commanders would also be assassinated. Suvorov emphasizes the importance attached to killing the President before he can be alerted and moved to a secure command post.

Spetsnaz units would infiltrate the open societies of the West in peacetime, using resident agents in the West to provide them with safehouses, food, and vehicles. These agents are quiet, everyday people who avoid politics. The Soviets want older, settled people, preferably retired, far removed from any sensitive jobs. People no one would have cause to investigate. They work for pay, waiting for the day when the "visitors" arrive to use the supplies they have set aside.

Suvorov's final chapter outlines operations that might take place before open war breaks out. Included: phony scandals discrediting key NATO generals, the "accidental" sinking of a freighter in the Panama Canal, and the bombing of the White House. Suvorov could keep writers of political thrillers in business for the next decade, but he is not, unfortunately, spinning fiction. He also gives details of the brutal training *Spetsnaz* troops withstand and of their weapons and tactics.

Of interest is the connection between *Spetsnaz* and the Soviet sports program. "The Soviet Army needs an enormous number of people with exceptional athletic ability at Olympic level to carry out special missions behind enemy lines," writes Suvorov. This makes *Spetsnaz* "a mixture of sport, politics, espionage and armed terrorism." The army maintains a vast system of teams to which most of the nation's top athletes are recruited (the largest sports organization in the USSR is the Central Army Sports Club). Sports without any military application, like golf, receive no support. Sports practice is mixed with commando training. Through participation in international competitions, these soldier-athletes are able to travel to target countries to get a feel for the territory.

While the Soviets have worked hard to improve their techniques, the US has found it increasingly difficult to act. In the early days of the Cold War, Soviet drives were turned back in Greece, Korea, Guatemala, and Iran. But by the 1960's, liberal opinion was finding such wars distasteful. Cuba was

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the first casualty, followed by Vietnam and the rest. A new theory of "limited war" was contrived, but unlike the older concept where the difference between limited and global war was geographical, the new theory placed limits on weapons and tactics within the theater of war. Victory was abandoned as being an "unlimited" object in favor of "coercive diplomacy" aimed at a negotiated, compromise settlement. However, this quickly slid into the cliché of seeking "political" rather than "military" solutions (translation: accepting most if not all of the enemy's terms rather than impose our own). Emphasis was also shifted to social reform as the way to head off Communism (thus implicitly accepting the leftist explanation for the cause of conflict), a program much more to liberal tastes than fighting. When this approach brought disaster, the next phase was to avoid conflicts altogether. Since defeat was inevitable, the methods needed to win being unacceptable on moral grounds, it was best to take the lowest-cost route to defeat.

The Reagan administration attempted to regain the initiative by supporting anticommunist wars of liberation. But even when it adopted democracy and social reform as its central themes, the effort was condemned. The flaps over "death squads," "assassination manuals," and the covert mining of Nicaraguan harbors used by ships delivering Soviet weapons revealed the enormous gap between the liberal view of the world and reality. Even attempts to rebuild a "special operations" capability for use against terrorists and drug dealers made little progress. Yet the success of the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan and the promise shown by anticommunist resistance movements in Nicaragua and Angola should put the lie to the notion that Soviet and leftist forces are invincible in this kind of warfare.

The basic principles of modern war are not secret. The US has the resources to meet and beat the Soviets in revolutionary warfare, whether supporting insurgents or regimes. The inhibiting factor is an inability to consider war and *Realpolitik* to be the normal practice of statecraft. It is clear from the writings of Shultz and Suvorov that the Soviets have no such inhibitions. ◈

From a Jacobean Play

by Tom Murray

You who are mad but nor'-nor'-west
Look kindlier on those possessed
and predestined to face
Their lunatic compass-point;

Whose times are out of joint,
Who miss the beat or lose the place,
See plans revealed in prisms
To turn to corn the ocean's waves,
Knock on a thousand doors announcing isms
Or man's return to dust,
Tip entire nations into bloody graves
Or waste their sweat in lust.

Forgive them when the daemons cease
Their hold and finally are fled.
Look down with mercy on their dead
Rejuvenated faces.

Find there instead
Wonder and innocence and peace.

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Blaming America First

by Michael Warder

The Survival of the Adversary Culture: Social Criticism and Political Escapism in American Society
by Paul Hollander
New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books; 299 pp., $27.95

◆

Paul Hollander is dogged, if not downright mulish, in his intellectual focus. As is the case in *Soviet and American Society* and his celebrated *Political Pilgrims*, this collection of previously published articles and reviews explores the perceptions and beliefs of American intellectuals in regard to Marxist-Leninist countries. What Hollander lacks in the flourish and breadth of, say a Paul Johnson, he more than makes up for with a depth of insight on an important topic. Simply put, his thesis is that American intellectuals alienated from mainstream values and institutions have a need to idealize adversaries of our system of constitutional democracy.

Indeed, in discussing aging Sovietologist and former diplomat George Kennan, Hollander writes, "as Mr. Kennan's appreciation for American society goes down, his esteem for its adversaries rises."

Hollander has seen much of other political and social systems and perhaps that is partial explanation of his continuing study of those who advocate the radical change of American society. He explains in an epilogue that he was born to a Jewish home in Hungary, and that he was 11 when Hitler's Nazi army occupied his first homeland in March 1944. In January the following year Stalin's Communist army swept out their totalitarian predecessors to impose their own twisted vision of the good society.

Despite superior achievement in school in the postwar years, Hollander was denied further education, and exiled in 1951 with his family to a small village because of his maternal grandfather's experience in business. He subsequently served in the army and did construction work. Hollander fled Hungary for Great Britain in November 1956 on the heels of the bloody Soviet suppression of the failed revolution. After obtaining a degree at the London School of Economics in 1959, he came to the United States to continue his education and to make his home. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Princeton in 1964, just in time to catch the upheavals of the 1960's.

It must have seemed strange to this comparative newcomer to observe highly-educated scholars mustering all of their critical faculties and harnessing them to the deepest suspicions about the American "system" and its leaders. These same individuals would gaze in awe at Castro, Ché, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao, as well as their local representatives, and give them every benefit of the doubt. With the fervor and posture of religious crusaders, seemingly fearless radicals strode American campuses, occupying buildings, disrupting classes, and damaging property while the police watched. They carried on these activities in solidarity with the revolutionary leaders from abroad, who also wanted to radically change American society.

The information concerning the famine, mass murder, and massive duplicity of communist systems was and is available. Some choose to see it, others do not. For the most alienated of American intellectuals, the Cubans, Nicaraguans, Vietnamese, etc. are revolutionary exotica, heroic Rambos and Davids of the left, ushering in the new society. They are so different from the imperialistic, technocratic Americans, with their weapons of mass destruction, that they have an entirely different character and are to be held to different standards. Yet Norman Mailer and others have never made clear why "it was morally preferable to kill in Vietnam one's enemies with concealed bamboo spikes smeared in excrement (to encourage blood poisoning) over burning them with napalm." The image conjures up a scene in *Apocalypse Now* where the lost American colonel, who has adopted native ways, expresses admiration at the diabolical genius of the Vietnamese who chopped off the arms of those children who had been vaccinated by the enemy Americans. Yes, indeed, small is beautiful.

The spirit of the 1960's survives, as does this same malevolence toward capitalist technology that leads "on the one hand to the despoliation of nature, on the other to the arms race and a possible nuclear war." Hollander cites an interview with feminist Marge Piercy, who blames the ruling class for oppressing and even "killing" the masses through the use of technology in television, drugs, asbestos, contraceptives, unnatural food, bad schools, nuclear power, and assorted other mechanisms.

Yet life expectancies in capitalist countries are on average higher than in Communist countries, and pollution levels are lower. Further, the Communist countries are desperately seeking Western technology so they can "catch up."

While alienated intellectuals bemoan technology, they use it on a daily basis to communicate with their fellow believers, publish and broadcast their message to the public, bring pleasure to their leisure time, and reduce the amount of time they spend in food preparation, keeping warm or cool, and personal grooming. While they see "Big Brother" here in America, with our great capability to gather and retain information, they cannot see what less advanced versions of this technology can do when put to use in the great modern police states of the 20th century. The implicit presumption is that socialist technology is superior to capitalist technology, but one's own microwave and CD player are sacred.

In the past alienated intellectuals had little by way of social and financial support networks. Today it would seem that blaming America first is the shibboleth for success. Societal estrange-

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ment is now compatible with "a reasonably cheerful personal disposition and the untroubled enjoyment of the available pleasures of life: material, social, aesthetic." As these alienated folk look to Gorbachev's recasting of the Leninist blueprint, they sympathetically see the hardships he faces as he exorcises the Stalinist demon of terror and the Brezhnevian demon of stagnation. Every current Soviet evil is excused because of the difference in culture, history, or geography, while every pleasant similarity is seized upon and highlighted as proof that they are, wonder of wonders, "just like us."

My only objection to the book is technical. The numerous typos disconcert the reader, as does the unnecessary repetition of the same quotes from one chapter to the next. On the whole, however, this book is dense with insight and documentation on social critics with Marxian *wanderlust*.

Michael Warder is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

Merlin of the Woods

by F.W. Brownlow

The Coming of the King
by Nikolai Tolstoy
New York: Bantam Books;
640 pp., $18.95

The matter of the Celts has had a strong hold on the English-speaking imagination for a long time, at least since the publication in the mid-18th century of the forged *Poems of Ossian*; but it was a symbolic moment of great importance when Matthew Arnold told his Oxford audience how, on a seaside holiday at Llandudno in North Wales in 1864, he had turned his back on "the prosperous Saxon" to his east, and looked on the "eternal softness and mild light of the west." Since then the conviction has grown that things missing from modern life — romance, poetry, mystery, ancient lore — will be found in those remote northern and western zones of the British Isles. For, as the contemporary poet X.J. Kennedy puts it, "Somebody stole my myths,/Took all their gist and piths," and from that sad certainty it is an easy translation to a strong hope that replacements will be found north of the Roman wall, west of the River Severn, and over the Irish Sea.

As fantasies go, this one is fairly harmless, and it has given rise to a huge bibliography, fictional and nonfictional, some of it eccentric. Nikolai Tolstoy is a contributor to this literature. Although best known for his books on his family, and on the compulsory repatriation of Soviet citizens in 1945, he has also written *The Quest for Merlin*, a book about the historicity of Merlin, and now this long fictional narrative of Merlin's life, *The Coming of the King*, the first of three volumes. He knows Irish and Welsh, and is familiar with the materials that survive from that dim period of British history between the departure of the Romans and the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. To that extent his story is based on authentic matter; but there is no denying its eccentricity.

Tolstoy's Merlin is not based on the Arthurian Merlin of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History*, but on Merlin Silvester, Merlin of the Woods, a mad northern prophet of the 6th century, whose legend survives in fragmentary references in a handful of medieval Welsh poems, and in Geoffrey's *Life of Merlin*. Like Geoffrey's Merlin, however, Tolstoy's is a composite figure who shares some of the features of the Arthurian Merlin. Moreover, whereas the original Merlins are obviously fairy-tale creatures, this one is downright mythological, a miraculous child born of a divine father and a virgin mother, who harrows hell, sleeps with his sister the morning star, and grows from a precocious child into a one-eyed old man in about a year.

At the time of the story, Merlin is dead, and he tells the tale of his life and transmigrations to a later British king in a dream. He also gives his sleeping visitor a portrait of Dark-Age British society and its Germanic enemies. Like Matthew Arnold, he much prefers the Celts to the Germans, even though he portrays his fellow Britons as unintelligent people on the whole, who laugh a lot for no reason, and drink themselves insensible at every opportunity on "the yellow ensnaring mead." They are touchy and quarrelsome, and their most marked trait is a habit of orotund speech, packed with mythological and geographical references; they sound like a society of pagan fundamentalists. They are supposed to be Christians, but their clergy are scatty old men whom no one takes seriously, and all the real religious work is done by druids. (When the dying tribune Rufinus asks to be baptized, Merlin can only find a druid, who performs an analogous ceremony in Welsh; the implication is that it is much the same, just as effective, and much prettier. To his credit, Merlin feels guilty about the deceit.)

The Britons' enemies, "the mongrel hosts of the Iwys," as the Anglo-Saxons are called, though equally fond of mythological references, are much clearer-headed and better-organized. They are cunning, brutal, sadistic worshippers of death in the form of a demon god, and they take a keen interest in committing atrocities. In fact, they look suspiciously like ancestors of the Nazis' death's-head battalions; they even plot to sell the conquered Britons as slaves for the Imperial mines and factories. And whereas Merlin's father, the British god, is a Celtic Christ, the Saxon's Woden is a Germanic Lucifer.

The main story is about a battle fought at a place called Dineirth or Beranburh between the Britons under Maelgun and an immense, pan-Germanic force (which includes Beowulf) under Cynric of Wessex. The chronology of events is vague, for as we learn from Merlin, the Brythonic Celts are not good at time. They do not think it exists. If, however, we consult the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*, we will find that this battle was fought in 556 between Cynric alone and unnamed opponents, and that contrary to what Merlin tells us, Cynric survived and presumably won. Merlin's role in events is not clear, although in some way he is the guardian of Britain. He continually experiences visions, and even loses his eye during one of them, but he seems not to understand their meaning. After his last adventure, involving transformation into a fish, and disguise in a newly flayed skin of a pig, he returns full of information about enemy plans; he does not tell us how he gets it, but one presumes it was by more conventional techniques than

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shamanism and totemistic disguises.

Nikolai Tolstoy's *Merlin*, like Geoffrey of Monmouth's, is an invention based upon a few hints, and it suffers from the lack of resistance that such amorphous material offers to the imagination. At its best it is a good read, full of curious, startling, misleading, sometimes titillating matter. Its style is best described as high pastiche, with echoes of *Ossian*, of *Waverley*, of Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*, of Robert Graves and other more popular writers. New Agers will enjoy Merlin's Gnostic dualism and fatalism, his ecumenical and comparative mythology, his transmigrations, shamanism, and numerology—and his prose will not bother them. Many other readers will find it a disturbing book, an essay in revisionism with little or no relationship to real history, which it remakes under the weight of some modern preoccupations.

Consider the role of Beowulf, the only surviving hero of the epic poetry of the Old English people. His poet, who knew something of Vergil and the Bible, portrayed him as a good, brave, generous man, an asserter of order against evil and death. He is a father to his people, who in old age goes out to his last fight in their defense. *Beowulf* is one of the first works of English Christian humanism, possibly first composed in Northumbria as early as the age of Bede and the Lindisfarne Gospels. The poem is unique testimony to a people, its hero a forerunner of the chivalry to come.

Tolstoy's Beowulf, on the contrary, is a bestial Goliath, killed in a rampage of bloodlust, his mail-coat "encrusted with broken flesh and running gore," and his nails and jaws dripping blood. Like so much else in the book, that is pure, or impure, invention, and it seems a pointless revision of a character that has survived a thousand years of violence and change. It also gives the lie to one of the few evidences we have of the mentality of that age.

Admittedly *Beowulf* is a poem, and so a fiction; but so are the sources of Merlin, and so are all our myths, by definition. It is a question of the value of our fictions, and of the beliefs they carry. Did Vergil prophesy the coming of Christ? Did Constantine give the succession of the Western empire to the Church? Did Arthur and his companions preserve an idea of civil and imperial order in the anarchy that followed the fall of Rome? The revisionist answers no, and goes on to research and imagine real Vergils, real Constantines, and real Arthurs. Vergil, he says, was a clever poet who lined his pockets by flattering the most important man he knew. Constantine was a soldier-politician who used a new religion for his own ends. Arthur, if he existed at all, was a British chieftain who fought a briefly successful rear-guard action against the Saxon invaders, and no doubt suffered from fleas.

The trouble with this attitude is that without the prophetic Vergil there would be no Christian humanist poetry as we know it. The Donation of Constantine may be a forgery, but without the idea of it there would be no Europe of the many parishes and the great cathedrals, nor, to come a little closer to our English-speaking place of origin, would Gregory the Great have sent Augustine and his 40 companions to restore the lost province of Britain to the Church. Without Arthur and his round table, the history and the social forms of Western Europe, especially of Britain and France, would be quite different from those we know. The "real" Vergil, Constantine, and Arthur are phantasms of the modern imagination, and they are quite unimportant. Vergil of the prophecy, Constantine of the gift, and Arthur of the round table are the historical reality of the Europe we all know. They are the myths we think we have lost, and they are here, at home, on our own bookshelves. And Merlin and Beowulf are with them.

F.W. Brownlow is a professor of English at Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts.

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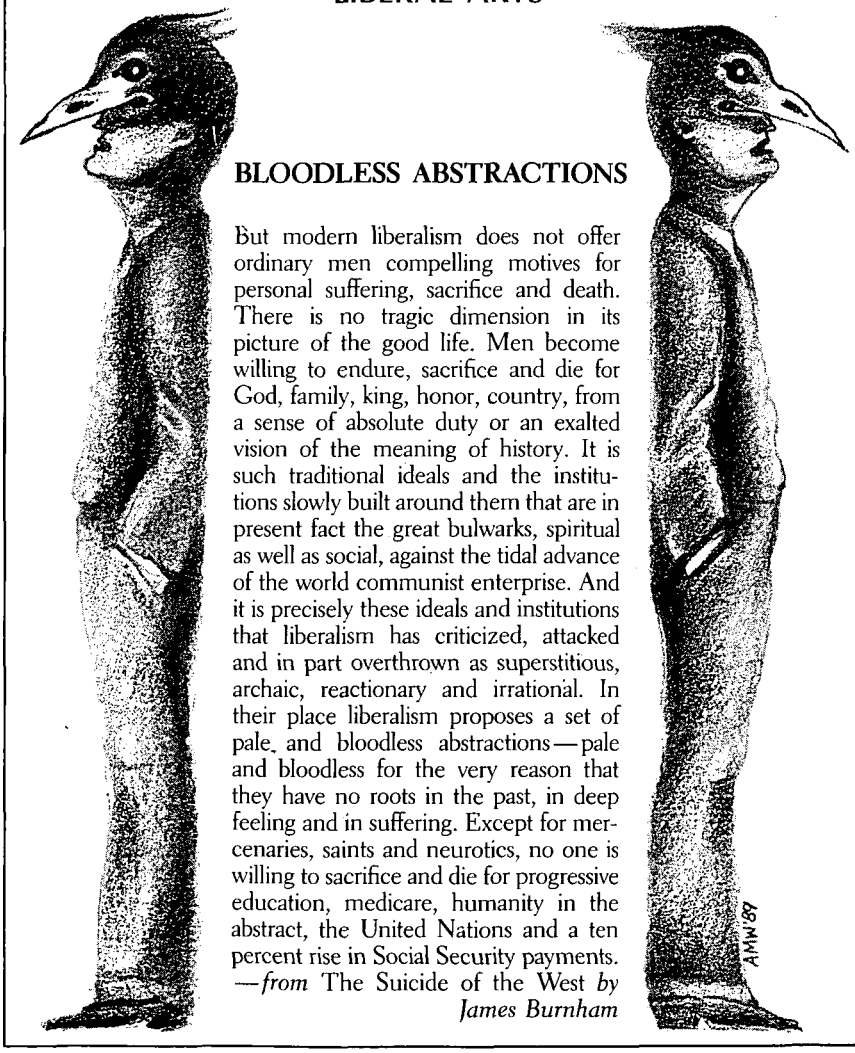

BLOODLESS ABSTRACTIONS

But modern liberalism does not offer ordinary men compelling motives for personal suffering, sacrifice and death. There is no tragic dimension in its picture of the good life. Men become willing to endure, sacrifice and die for God, family, king, honor, country, from a sense of absolute duty or an exalted vision of the meaning of history. It is such traditional ideals and the institutions slowly built around them that are in present fact the great bulwarks, spiritual as well as social, against the tidal advance of the world communist enterprise. And it is precisely these ideals and institutions that liberalism has criticized, attacked and in part overthrown as superstitious, archaic, reactionary and irrational. In their place liberalism proposes a set of pale and bloodless abstractions—pale and bloodless for the very reason that they have no roots in the past, in deep feeling and in suffering. Except for mercenaries, saints and neurotics, no one is willing to sacrifice and die for progressive education, medicare, humanity in the abstract, the United Nations and a ten percent rise in Social Security payments.

—*from* The Suicide of the West *by James Burnham*

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A Cultural Cincinnatus

by David R. Slavitt

First and Last Words
by Fred Chappell
Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press; 57 pp., $13.95 cloth; $6.95 paper

◆

There are passages, even whole poems in Fred Chappell's new collection for which there are clearly precedents in, or one might say kinships to, the work of other poets. The urbane chattiness of "Subject Matter," for instance, makes no bones about it.

> It is nice to imagine how
> Auden would open
> a poem about the *Farbenlehre*
> with a genial phrase:
> "The mistaken Faust put
> down his prism . . . "—
> something like that, but defter;
> would find an *ism*
> rhyme pleasant and refreshing,
> and with polished ease
> would set the situation,
> drop in
> an intriguing fact
> or two,
> keeping in mind his aim
> to civilize
> our anxious century.

There are other notes and timbres, though. "Bee" recalls the elegiac John Crowe Ransom. "The Garden" is redolent of Wallace Stevens in its elegantly meditative whimsicality. There are traces—there always have been—of Allen Tate, and there are other voices, too, some of which I may have missed. One can take notice of such gestures, admire their parlor-trick dexterity, and leave it at that. But I think that would be to miss part of the point of Chappell's extraordinary new volume.

Bemused imitation, more or less helpless, is predictable behavior in a promising novice. Indeed, that's mostly how a novice learns the tricks of his trade as, by trial and error, he discovers his own character and voice. Chappell, however, is an accomplished master. There can't be a dozen poets now writing in English to compare with him for technical facility, breadth of culture, and emotional range. If Fred Chappell is playing around this way, it must be serious play. Surely, whatever he does, he does now not merely on impulse but with deliberation.

These performances in various keys, these nods, friendly, pious, or polite, in the direction of various literary forebears serve to extend the range of Chappell's established voice, to insist on the richness of the choices he faces among competing cultural and stylistic possibilities of life in America, of his life in North Carolina at the close of the millennium. He signs himself, as he always has, ever since *The World Between the Eyes*, as a man of the country, a man whose diction can sometimes verge on back-roads quaintness ("to olden," meaning "to age," is not a verb many contemporary poets have used). He is proud to show that he comes from farming people. The assertion, then, in these poems—as natural to them as breathing or laughter—of cosmopolitan high culture is no mere embellishment but a part of their purpose, an aesthetic and even political comment that seems to me to conform to Tate's model and that of the other Fugitives. Their ideal was a kind of cultural Cincinnatus, the amateur, the man of the country whose connection with learning, in no way trendy, was the very opposite of what the city slickers banter about at their cocktail parties. If a man's house is his castle, it can also be his university and his club.

The bookishness of this book arises, I should imagine, from Chappell's realization that city dwellers tend to be overstimulated and therefore deprived of the tranquility that is an important part of intellectual life. One must have time to read and to reread, which used to be all there was to do before those dish antennas started sprouting up among the outbuildings of farms. Chappell's title, *First and Last Words*, refers to his nine prologue and nine epilogue poems, all of which are meditations either on texts (Job, the *Oresteia*, *Beowulf*, *The Wind in the Willows*, or the Constitution of the United States) or writers (Goethe, Tolstoy, Tacitus, Livy, Einstein, Kant). He is claiming these books and writers, as well as explaining and commenting upon them—as one might explain and comment on the lives of interesting neighbors.

The middle section, "Entr'acte," is a garland of short poems that aren't bookish except insofar as they arise from the cultivated ground of Chappell's mind and sensibility. If he had not already established himself as an uncannily accurate reporter of country scenes, "Bee" would make his reputation:

> The house is changed where
> death has come,
> as the rose is changed
> by the visit of the bee and his
> freight of pollen.
> The house is opened to
> the mercies
> of strangers to whom the
> dead father
> is presented like a
> delectable veal,
> for whom the linens are
> unearthed
> and spread to air, the whiskies
> decanted.
>
> Survivors gossip their
> last respects:
> a bumble of voices in the
> living room
> like the drowse of music
> around the white hive busy in
> the sunny field.
>
> In the breathless
> upstairs bedroom
> one lost bee
> crawls the pane behind the
> glass curtain,
> searching to enter that field and
> all its clovers.

What sets such pieces—fine as they are—is their placement between the prologues and epilogues, the bookish poems that range in tone and time to invoke and re-enliven the culture's resources. "Patience," a prologue to *The Georgics*, opens with a vision of rural life:

> The farmers and their animals
> have sculpted the world
> To a shape like some smooth
> monumental family group,
> The father mountains and the
> mother clouds, their progeny
> meadows
> Stationed about them, as if
> posing for a photograph
> To be taken from a silver orbiter
> spaceship by beings
> Like angelic horses, who return

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to their home world
With pleasant report: *Leave*
Earth alone, it is at peace.

But he goes on immediately to say:

Always the Poet knew it wasn't
that way.
Total
War throughout the globe,
justice and injustice
Confounded, every sort of
knavery, the plow
Disused unhonored, the farmer
conscripted and his scythe
Straitly misshapen to make
a cruel sword.

And later, he makes his point with more animus:

Such slaughter, they say,
manures the fields of Utopia.
So that the plowman in a
sleepier century
Turns up the bones of a
legendary Diomedes
And marvels that the land used
to nourish those giants
Who have now become the
subsoil in which the Capitol
Is footed: where the softhanded
senators daylong
Argue the townsman's ancient
case against the farmer:
He is behind the times, he will
never understand.
The decisions there brought
back to the homestead in
the form of taxes
And soldiers, who look with
envious eyes upon this life
They fleer at, guzzling the
murky raw-edged
country wine.

But nothing changes. The war
grinds over the world and all
Its politics, the soldiers marry
the farmers' daughters
And tell their plowman sons
about the fight at the
Scaean Gate,
And the other sanguine
braveries the dust has eaten.
Sundown still draws the
chickens to their purring
roost,
The cow to the milking stall,
the farmer to his porch
to watch
Whether the soaring
constellations promise rain.

There is an abundance here, of extraordinary work, but beyond the individually excellent poems, there is that model in Fred Chappell's mind and on these pages, of what kind of life to aspire to, what it means to be "A Man of Letters in the Modern World." The phrase is one Tate used as a title for a collection of essays, and is appropriate because Chappell's model may be somewhat modernized and improved from Tate's version, but is akin to it. (One of these new poems is "Afternoons with Allen," a prologue to Tate's *The Fathers*.)

Rilke and Roethke have both told us that for poetry we must change our lives. Chappell, in his quiet way, makes a more profound suggestion — that poetry may also be a way of saving our lives. If there could be justice, charm, generosity, wisdom, decency, pity, and taste all working together — as they are here, in miraculous abundance — we would have every reason to hope.

David R. Slavitt is a poet and novelist who lives in Philadelphia.

The Ethos of Freedom

by E. Christian Kopff

Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos
by James M. May
Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press

◆

"That's just rhetoric!" So we dismiss statements we have little respect for. Readers of Tacitus' *Dialogue on Orators* will remember that the Roman historians thought that eloquence is a sign of a free state. There was a time when the speeches of Burke and Canning, of Daniel Webster and Abraham Lincoln were studied in school and sat in stately volumes on the bookshelves of educated readers. What would Tacitus think of the state of public speaking today?

As William Butler Yeats made his own *persona* a key element in his poetry, so the great Roman orator Cicero (103-43 B.C.) molded an *ethos* that developed over time and yet provided a basis for persuasion and great literature. As with Yeats, the *persona* was based on reality. In *Trials of Character*, Professor James M. May provides students with the first thorough investigation into the interaction of fact and fancy in Cicero's life and works that produced some of the most brilliant speeches ever delivered. Since Cicero's carefully wrought *persona* was rooted in his changing status as he climbed the Roman ladder of success to the top, May's book often amounts to a biography of Cicero from the perspective of his literary art. May's painstaking analyses of important orations make it clear that a literary technique often associated with literary modernism was used by a master craftsman in the ancient world to create not "rhetoric," but passion and persuasion.

Cicero lived in a society where enormous prestige belonged to the powerful, who were not afraid to flaunt it. In his early speeches Cicero developed rhetorical strategies premised on his real position as an underdog standing up to powerful and dangerous leaders.

May blames Cicero because in the glory days after he became consul he emphasized *ethos* to the exclusion of clear narrative and proper presentation of evidence. May seems to forget that by that time, Cicero no longer spoke alone for a client, but as one of a number of distinguished advocates. Each speech concentrated on the special skill of the orator, and while narrative and proof were allotted to other speakers, Cicero was typically asked to speak last and concentrate on character and emotion. That he was given this position so often indicates that Cicero's use of *ethos* was recognized in his own day as brilliant and original. It would have made no sense for him to repeat the work of earlier speakers.

The passages from Cicero's speeches are given in the translation found in the Loeb Classical Library, with the Latin reserved for the notes in the back, to help make the book accessible to more readers. When May deals with Latin that is not Cicero's, problems arise. In quoting the famous first simile of Vergil's *Aeneid*, May translates *Furor arma ministrat* (1.149) as "fury ministers to arms," but the phrase means "Fury supplies the arms." (See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, *ministro*, 3.) A few similar slips make one wish that

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the referees at the University of North Carolina Press had been more vigilant.

Cicero, young and old, knew, as did Jefferson and Adams in their correspondence, that freedom and character are indissoluble. Without one, the other soon vanishes. James May has reminded us vividly how both elements worked together in the life of a great man to create great literature.

E. Christian Kopff teaches Greek and Latin in Boulder, Colorado.

Family Finances

The Family Wage: Work, Gender, and Children in the Modern Economy
edited by Bryce J. Christensen
Rockford, IL: The Rockford Institute; 138 pp., $9.95

◆

Once a social ideal for many Americans — progressive reformers, labor leaders, enlightened businessmen like Henry Ford, and some New Dealers — "the family wage" has fallen into disrepute in recent decades. Under the spell of egalitarian feminists, America's political and cultural leaders now reject as hopelessly "sexist" the notion that a man should earn enough to support his wife and children. Yet not everyone has forgotten the family wage, nor is everyone blind to the social costs of repudiating the concept. This valuable little book brings together four papers presented at a conference held in the spring of 1988 that examine the historical and contemporary significance of the family wage. Although uneven, the papers combine to tell an important part of the story of the unraveling of American family life.

In the first essay, Allan Carlson investigates the historical roots of the family wage. He points out that in preindustrial Europe, "family life found a relatively natural setting" on farms and in villages. But the emergence of market capitalism created new economic pressures that threatened family life. Not only did wage competition between the sexes erode the complementarity of gender roles, but the new labor market failed to compensate for the unusual burdens borne by fathers and bachelors. Laissez-faire theorists such as Smith and Ricardo still trusted that the market would in time sort things out equitably and provide wages sufficiently high for family life. Marx and Engels predicted that wage competition would so undermine family life that it would lead to social chaos, revolution, and eventually communism. Many social reformers, however, rejected both laissez-faire optimism and communist determinism. They held that conscious intervention into the wage market could protect the family and forestall social chaos. Such was the guiding logic of Catholic philosophers, Progressives, and early 20th-century labor leaders who demanded an end to the employment of children and married women, while calling for male wages high enough to support a family.

If the other three papers seem to lack clarity and rigor, the reason may in part be that their authors are looking not at the coherent ideals of the past, but at the untidy realities of the present. "Nineteenth-century Americans had a very definite sense of the ideal family," stresses historian Maris Vinovskis. In contrast, Vinovskis finds that "this ideal of family life [appears] increasingly obsolete" in contemporary America, as fertility and marriage rates have fallen, while rates for divorce, illegitimacy, and female employment have climbed. Friends of the family will not be heartened by his survey of demographic trends.

The feminist attitude toward the family wage receives attention from Jean Bethke Elshtain. In Elshtain's assessment, the family wage divides the "hard-line equal rights feminists," who repudiate it as "little more than a conspiracy between and among patriarchs . . . to keep women down," from social feminists, who regard it more favorably as "a form of resistance to the worst vagaries of capitalism on the part of men *and* women of the working classes." Elshtain's own position is clear: "Those feminists who persist in picturing a world of coequal individualist male and female careerists, avidly exercising their free choices as their children are tended to in modern and spacious day-care centers, endorse a social myth that is more fantastic by far than any ever embodied in the family wage." Yet Elshtain's depiction of a feminist tug-of-war on this issue is misleading. In fact, equal-rights feminists totally dominate the contemporary movement, allowing the few remaining social feminists no more than token influence on their agenda.

Largely because of the triumph of feminist doctrine, economist Richard Vedder faces an almost insuperable task in trying to envision the "reconstruction of the family wage." Still, he manages an intelligent discussion of how inflationary policies drive up divorce rates, recommending a number of fiscal reforms to bring federal spending under control. Vedder also offers sensible recommendations for reducing the anti-family effects of the welfare system.

Fortunately, the book does not conclude with "the dismal science" of economics. In an appended "Summary of a Discussion," editor Bryce Christensen provides an account of the lively discussions of the 19 people attending the conference. A diverse group — scholars from several different disciplines, a labor leader, a business executive, a homemaker, a journalist, and a foundation executive — the participants ranged widely in their discussion of the cultural and economic trends affecting family life. Naturally, the discussion comments are suggestive rather than definitive, but on some topics, including the limitations of economics, the proper role of government, and Catholic social thought, the exchanges are heated enough to strike sparks.

The Other Jewish America

by Elliot C. Rothenberg

Members of the Tribe: On the Road in Jewish America
by Ze'ev Chafets
New York: Bantam Books; 259 pp., $18.95

◆

From the general media and Jewish weeklies published in most large American cities the reader will learn more than he cares to about the political and social doings of what Ze'ev Chafets calls "federated Judaism," an interlocking directorate of the leadership of

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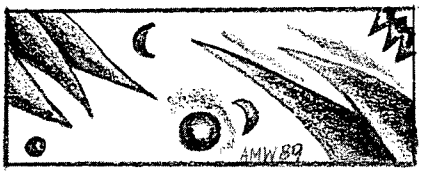
upscale synagogues, the fund-raising community federations, and the inevitable country clubs. These people are the often self-appointed elite of the Jewish community. It goes without saying that country club membership is open only to the most financially well-off and socially "acceptable" members.

Likewise, the federations are controlled not only by the big givers, which is not unexpected, but by those subscribing to the conventional wisdom of the liberal ideological agenda to which established Jewry remains in thrall. Chafets tells of one prominent outfit called the New Israel Fund whose goal is not to make life easier for the Israeli populace, much less the leadership of either major party, but rather to transform Israel into the type of place "that would meet the approval of the ACLU, The Nation magazine, and the Sierra Club." Apparently wanting to apply the same philosophy to the US, many national and local Jewish organizations joined the lynch mob against Robert Bork.



Securing membership in a synagogue is not very easy, either. Here, dues rather than overt ideological standards are the big hurdle. Most synagogues do not charge a fixed annual fee for all, but set obligations on the basis of perceived ability to pay. Although the motive may be admirable, the financial test exposes the prospective member to a humiliating inquisition into his assets and annual income by synagogue "finance committees" peopled by creatures who were evidently unsuccessful in their applications to become IRS auditors. Not only that, these synagogues then typically favor those paying the highest dues in dispensing honors and perquisites. After having to put up with these invidious distinctions, the congregants get a lot more newly-fashionable politics than old-fashioned religion.

Chafets, who grew up in Michigan but has lived in Israel for the past 20 years, tells of a first visit in two decades to his old temple in Pontiac, where it turned out that very little had changed. The thrust of the sermon was that the prophets had all been liberal Democrats who would have supported the ERA, gun control, school busing, and a cutoff of aid to the contras. "In my day, the prophets were Hubert Humphrey men; twenty years later, they were with Mario Cuomo and Michael Dukakis."

The protagonists of *Members of the Tribe* are, thankfully, not the synagogue, country club, and fund-raising poobahs who have made organized American Jewish communal life so banally conformist. Rather, Chafets devotes his work to the rich diversity of Jewish America one would never dream existed from the pages of *The New York Times*. (The *Times Book Review*, incidentally, delivered itself of a huffing dismissal of *Members of the Tribe* for "bypassing" the Jewish establishment. It should be anticipated that the elite media would give such short shrift to this indispensable book on a previously neglected aspect of American Jewish life; one of Chafets' earlier books, *Double Vision*, skewered America's leading media organs for left-wing bias in reporting on the Middle East.)

Chafets does not rehash what can be found every month in *Commentary*; indeed, there is nary a mention of Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, or any other intellectual fountainhead of neoconservative thought. Instead, Chafets' heroes are the Jews of Middle America, people who would never be allowed into the established country clubs or be encouraged for membership by many synagogues like, say, Temple Leo Baeck, Los Angeles' most fashionable synagogue, which Chafets calls a size-three congregation because of its members' predilection for frequenting equally toney health clubs.

One not at all chic group is policemen. Chafets informs us that Jewish policemen are not extinct, and that seven or eight walk the streets of Detroit alone. In fact, the most poignant portrait in the book is that of Detroit policeman Marty Goldfine, who for a time was assigned to guard the inner city Downtown Synagogue. Despite an excellent record, Goldfine had never been promoted beyond the rank of patrolman, frequently being passed over in favor of members of preferred races and gender. The theologians of affirmative action, of course, do not consider Jews a "minority" for their purposes, nor were Jews given, according to Goldfine, fair treatment by police officials or unions. It was a case of plain, old-fashioned discrimination. Yet, while otherwise active in anti-discrimination and "civil rights" causes currently in vogue, the organized Jewish community in Detroit refused to help Goldfine, since Jews were "not supposed to be cops." It would have been astonishing if it had acted otherwise; to liberals, middle-class males like Goldfine, regardless of whether or not they are Jewish, are the cannon fodder dragooned into bearing the cost of affirmative action reverse discrimination. Goldfine, not surprisingly, rejected the idea of moving to the suburbs because he did not feel comfortable with "federated Jewry." (Still, Goldfine was proud enough of his Jewish heritage to be "thrilled" to be featured in a Jewish book. Adding to the irony of all this was the fact that Goldfine changed his name back to the original family name from the Gaynor surname adopted by his father. In contrast, the former head of the B'nai B'rith, of all people, had his name altered from Abraham Fastenberg to a thoroughly anglicized moniker.)

Chafets chronicles his travels with a representative of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) through Midwestern hamlets searching for vest-pocket Jewish communities to aid the cause. Strange as it may seem at first blush, AIPAC has discovered a greater commitment to the preservation of Israel's security among these isolated Jews than in the enclaves of Manhattan, Cambridge, and Beverly Hills. In contrast to Brooklyn Heights and the Upper East Side, Yasser Arafat-chic evidently has not yet hit Rapid City, South Dakota.

The diversity of Jewish life mirrors that of the general society; along with Jewish policemen and mainstreet small-town merchants, Chafets unearthed Jewish cowboys, Jewish country-and-western singers, black Jews, and even Jewish inmates in a maximum security prison. Why does Marty Goldfine belong in the same book with the residents of Pennsylvania's Gaterford penitentiary? And why them with the other varied characters? Their one common denominator is their status as "misfits"—not welcomed, and at best barely tolerated, by the institu-

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tions of established Jewry.

Most important for those who are concerned with preserving traditional cultural values, *Members of the Tribe* assures us that, far from being anachronistic, Middle-American Jewry is alive and well. May it continue to prosper.

Elliot C. Rothenberg is president of the North Star Legal Foundation and a past national law director of the Anti-Defamation League.

By Blab Befuddled

by Bryce J. Christensen

By Silence Betrayed
by John Crewdson
Boston: Little, Brown;
267 pp., $17.95.

◆

Words cannot take us everywhere, nor should they. Before the most sublime truths, we grow reverently still. Confronted with bestiality, we shudder at the unspeakable. But in the Age of Blab, everything must be talked about. Indeed, modern journalists consider it progress to be able to chat endlessly about depravities our wiser ancestors refused even to name. So we must contend with productions such as John Crewdson's book on the sexual abuse of children.

An industrious researcher, Crewdson has interviewed dozens of victims and perpetrators of child abuse, has consulted scores of professionals, and has pulled his findings together in a crisp and readable book. Indeed, the breezy clarity of style symptomizes the fatal deficiency of this book. In treating sexual abuse as one more social problem to be solved through public discussion and policy reform, Crewdson hopelessly trivializes his subject.

Something of the horror of sex abuse does break through the journalistic banality in the interviews with victims. As voices of deep suffering, they deserve a hearing. But that hearing ought to come from those who love the speakers and have a long-term commitment to them. To put the sordid past of the sexually abused on public display for the scrutiny of strangers is to foster both exhibitionism and voyeurism. I felt dirty and defiled reading some of Crewdson's interviews.

Crewdson congratulates himself and others for daring to "speak out" on sex abuse. Yet it is an odd sort of courage to speak candidly and graphically about the most gruesome acts, but to be unable to manage more than a faint whisper when considering the cultural causes of sexual abuse. Perhaps it is too much to ask a metropolitan newsman for *The Chicago Tribune* to fathom the mystery of iniquity, but Crewdson betrays an absolute blindness to moral issues when he declares that "the sexual abuse of children is the pure product of an emotional disorder." Even worse is the pronouncement that "the pedophile's logic is in some sense ultimately correct. Sex with children *is* wrong because society says it's wrong. No better reason is required." A writer willing to reduce fundamental taboos to mere social conventions can hardly be trusted, even if he reaffirms those taboos.

Not surprisingly, the silence that Crewdson does not — and dares not — break is the silence surrounding the pretensions of modernity. These pretensions deserve closer analysis, since sexual abuse appears peculiarly linked to a modernizing culture. Although Crewdson too credulously accepts some inflated numbers, he is probably correct in suggesting that the sexual abuse of children — not just *reports* of such abuse — has risen in recent decades. To his credit, Crewdson traces sexual abuse to "the disintegration of the nuclear family, an increase in the numbers of working couples and single and divorced mothers, more second and third marriages, [and] the emergence of a permanent underclass." He acknowledges that day-care centers — distinctively modern institutions — often attract pedophiles as employees. He even takes a harder line than some congressmen against soft-porn magazines. But to probe much deeper into the causes of sexual abuse is to question the very foundations of our world of secularism and individualism — too frightening a task for this writer.

Despite its importance as a cause of maternal employment, divorce, and poverty, Crewdson never challenges feminism. Despite the frequency with which he identifies homosexuals as perpetrators of sexual abuse, Crewdson never confronts the issue of "gay rights." Despite the many cases of sexual abuse in which government social workers, therapists, and public-school teachers were themselves the culprits, Crewdson still acts upon the modern reflex of looking for solutions provided by the state and its natural allies in academia, the media, and the social-therapy industry. As remedies to the problem of the sexual abuse of children, Crewdson endorses federally-funded research, prevention programs in the schools, "long-term psychotherapy" administered by licensed therapists, stricter state screening of day-care workers, and public-service broadcasts on the media. Crewdson may perceive that family decay causes sexual abuse, but he has not yet supposed the unthinkable: that the rise of the welfare state is itself a cause of moral confusion in the family.

Within this statist perspective, the problem of unjust accusations of child abuse receives only scant attention. In citing a study that found that 65 percent of the child abuse cases in the country proved "unfounded," Crewdson stresses that "*unfounded* did not mean untrue, but only that the allegations in question could not be proved." It is odd that in a book filled with interviews with the victims of sexual abuse, the reader finds not a single interview with a family traumatized by state intervention on a *false* accusation of child abuse. Crewdson does worry that new judicial procedures for dealing with sexual abuse — including videotape testimony and admission of hearsay evidence — are eroding the defendant's Sixth Amendment right "to be confronted with the witnesses against him" and to cross-examine them. He likewise expresses reservations about proposals for extending the statute of limitations for sexual abuse to longer than that for other serious crimes. After all, "a child who makes an accusation years after the fact may not remember details about who did what to whom." But the new assumption of "guilty until proven innocent" has so insinuated itself into the author's mind that he can write approvingly of how "children can be taken from abusive or neglectful parents who have *not been charged with any crime*" by state officials (emphasis added).

Even further removed from Crewd-

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son's analysis is any consideration of how the extirpation of religion from public life has helped cause sexual abuse. Since the media have collaborated with government in the secularization of public life, an analysis of this question would require more self-scrutiny than most journalists can manage. Yet recent work by Yale historian John Demos indicates that the place of religion in a society may affect the incidence of child abuse. Although his concern is physical rather than sexual abuse, Demos has suggested that child abuse (as opposed to harsh discipline) is distinctively a modern phenomenon, caused by urbanization, industrial development, unemployment, on-the-job alienation, and the collapse of "the 'providential' world view of our forebears—their belief that all things, no matter how surprising and inscrutable, must be attributed to God's overarching will." Because he fails to explore such cultural issues, Crewdson gives only an exposé wrapped in an editorial.

No doubt Crewdson is right that many children have been "betrayed" by the silence of those who knew of or suspected sexual abuse but said nothing. But a book like this one simply adds to the senseless din making it impossible to reflect seriously upon our crisis of culture.

Bryce J. Christensen is director of The Rockford Institute Center on the Family in America.

The 31st President

by Paul Gottfried

The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917
by George H. Nash
New York and London:
W.W. Norton and Co.;
497 pp., $25.00

◆

George Nash, though still in his early 40's, has become one of our most prolific American historians. His output consists of a seminal study of the postwar American Right, numerous essays on American conservatism, and since 1975 a multivolume biography of Herbert Hoover. His exhaustive research into Hoover has yielded an introductory volume of more than 700 pages, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Engineer, 1874-1914* (1983), a learned monograph, *Herbert Hoover and Stanford University* (1988), and now the second part of the general biography begun in 1975, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917*. Like all of Nash's writings, the newest volume is meticulously researched and immaculately written. Though Nash identifies himself and American conservatism with the doctrine of Progress, his work may in fact be a throwback to the 19th century, when history was widely viewed as a dispassionate discipline intended for gentlemen who could rise above partisan impulses. Nash always writes with philosophic detachment and rhetorical restraint.

His portrait of Hoover has won the praise of *The Washington Post* and, more predictably, of movement conservatives, in both cases for good reason. Hoover, the fabulously successful mining engineer and world traveler, descended from and orphaned by Iowan Quakers, can be seen as an appropriate metonymy for the American on the make. The quest for wealth and the passion for humanitarian service are both aspects of the American character that Hoover personified. He showed other characteristically modern American traits as well, such as a dualistic view of other nations. His involvement with Belgian relief during the First World War aroused his revulsion for Imperial Germany and led him to view the war as an ideological struggle. Hoover, no less than President Woodrow Wilson and Colonel Edward House, went from support of selective humanitarian aid (in view of the massive British blockade of Germany, aid could go to the Allies more easily than it could to the beleaguered Germans), to the judging of Germany as a political threat, and, from there, to a call for a democratic crusade against the powers of darkness. Hoover was urging on Wilson a program of national mobilization even before war was declared. Notes Nash: "The humanitarian-turning-war-mobilizer was well aware that his appeal for centralized social control ran against the American tradition of states' rights and even (he noted several times) the Constitution. But to him there was no alternative."

In England during the war, Hoover consorted with disciples of Richard Cobban, the 19th-century radical democrat who had taught that free trade would usher in an age of internationalism and equality. Hoover's affinity for Cobban and his disciples tells much about his early philosophic orientation, though it is equally true that as an elder statesman he gave evidence of a sober, realistic side. In his cautious attitude toward American intervention during the Second World War and, then, in the Cold War, Hoover became the mentor of Robert Taft and abandoned his Wilsonianism—despite his continued tributes to someone he had once served. At some point, America for Hoover ceased to be a proposition and became a real country, with legitimate national interests.

Though Nash has not yet reached the post-Wilsonian Hoover, he does suggest in the first two volumes something that may account for his subject's evolution from utopian internationalist to old-fashioned patriot. Much of Hoover's adult years until the 1920's were spent outside the United States, in China, Belgium, France, England, and Russia. Throughout these years, Hoover struggled with the question of American identity in relation to the rest of the world. What distinguished his experience growing up in Iowa, Oregon, and California from the way of life among non-Americans, particularly Asians? In his younger years, Hoover was accustomed to respond "equality of opportunity," as if American life on the plains or in the Pacific Northwest at the end of the 19th century could be reduced to a single rhetorical phrase.

But in his later years, one suspects, he came to see the American experience of his youth as a unique culture that could not be exported *en bloc*. Despite the utopian and statist phase of Hoover's life depicted in volume two, one expects to find Hoover transformed again in the later volumes. The global crusader lived long enough to become a defender of American liberties and a critic of his own middle-aged enthusiasms.

Paul Gottfried is a senior editor at The World and I.

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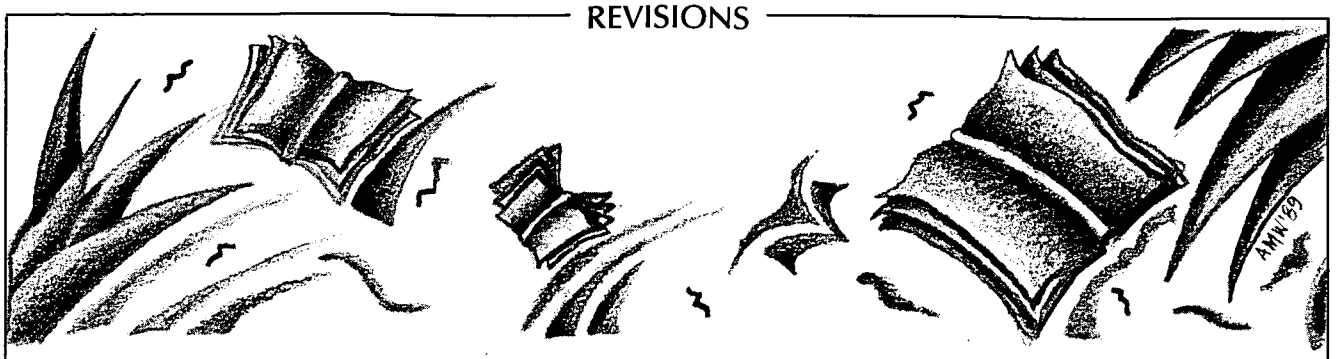

MONKEY BUSINESS

Liberalism as a formidable political philosophy was dead before the First World War. The negative critique (and in the world of affairs, the destruction) of social status, established religion, and traditional privileges (for poor as well as for rich) had succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of the *philosophes*, but no one was satisfied, not the working classes who listened ever more eagerly to the socialists, and not the intellectuals who suffered hunger pangs on the thin gruel of rational individualism. Nietzsche and Marx, Eliot and Brecht offered richer sustenance, and the 20th century has proved to be a cultural battleground between right and left. The liberal intellectual, like the liberal artist, is almost a contradiction in terms.

Leftist critics of liberalism, like Anthony Arblaster, have mounted a devastating attack on liberal capitalism, and while there has been no lack of responses from the various liberal factions, no credible defense of centrist liberalism has been produced. The exception that proves the rule is John Gray's *Liberalism*, a solid and intelligent book by a philosopher who soon defected to the right. Among the most recent counterattacks is *Liberalism: Politics, Ideology, and the Market* by sociologist John A. Hall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 254 pp., $24.95). Although Hall's analysis is not without its good points, it will take more than this to restore an outworn ideology to life.

Hall takes on Arblaster as his main target and disputes the conventional thesis that liberalism is inextricably bound up with capitalism. (Among the book's many shortcomings is Hall's ignorance of the spirited defense of liberal capitalism mounted by neoconservatives like Michael Novak.) Capitalism, in Hall's view, is only a means to an end, and the end is a view of individuals as "the seat of moral value, as of equal worth." One might argue that a great many non-liberal moral philosophies have held a similar view, but there is, of course, more to Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Hume than simpleminded individualism. Indeed, even Hall describes the core principles of liberalism as "banal, spare."

There are intelligent liberals who say foolish things. One might mention Rawls and Nozick at Mr. Hall's university, or down the road to New Haven, Bruce Ackerman and Douglas Rae, or all the way South to Texas, the only philosopher to hold a chair named after a football coach, James Fishkin. But of these serious liberals, Hall mentions only his Harvard colleagues and dismisses them with a shrug. But Hall's ignorance is not limited to the 1980's. His History of Ideas 101 discussion of Hume could not have been written by anyone who had read either Alasdair MacIntyre or Donald Livingston. Worse, he has to borrow Michael Ignatieff's pop description of Hume's deathbed conversations with Boswell, as if the source could not be obtained from any library. I thought Harvard professors had graduate assistants who could read, even if the professor couldn't, and I also thought the University of North Carolina Press had referees.

A more revealing flaw in Hall's book is his discussion of science. He is enthralled with the march of progress (with which he connects both science and liberalism) and can write, without irony, of the blessings of peace and humanity that science has brought to the 20th century. He observes that whatever its shortcomings, "the scientific/industrial complex at least gives us the possibility of decent behavior." What a wealth of naiveté to pack into a single clause!

But hand in hand with this touching faith in science goes a near total ignorance of anything that scientists might have to say about the human condition or man as the social and political animal. Of the revolutions in psychology, anthropology, and biology, there is hardly a word. Here is a mighty faith, indeed. Like most liberals, Hall takes his view of human nature from the three monkeys: see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil.

A far different sort of optimism is offered by the primatologist Frans De Waal in a wonderfully readable new book, *Peacemaking Among Primates* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 294 pp., $29.95). Even the most boring primatology affords more insight into the human condition than most political sociology, and De Waal is never boring. In *Peacemaking*, he reviews the existing studies of conflict resolution among monkeys and apes (both in the wild and in captivity) and joins to them his own research on captive chimpanzees and rhesus monkeys. His purpose is the frankly philosophical, even ideological goal "to correct biology's bleak orientation on the human condition."

In his earlier book, *Chimpanzee Politics*, De Waal had described in loving detail the mechanisms of social order employed by man's nearest relatives. In his latest book, he focuses in on the problems of conflict and resolution, war and peace, in several species. The best chapters are as readable as a novel (De Waal has more than once been chided for his exuberant anthropomorphism), and what emerges is a general perception of primates as ambitious schemers, coalition builders, murderers if necessary, but able and eager to resolve their conflicts peaceably wherever possible. It is only at the end that De Waal falls prey to the universalist sentimentality that lies at the heart of liberalism: "We must teach our children new goals, different skills, and global responsibility. . . ." Surely the opposite conclusion is to be drawn from his work—that man's capacity for love is not infinite but must be rooted in local and tribal attachments, and that to love our universal neighbor as ourselves, we must begin by learning to love our neighbor next door. (TF)

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Billy, The Fabulous Moolah, and Me

◆

When I first heard that V.S. Naipaul was writing a book about the South, it made me nervous. What would the author of *Among the Believers* make of Jim and Tammy? Could we look for *Louisiana: A Wounded Civilization*?

Well, I've been reading *A Turn in the South*, just out last winter from Knopf. I'm supposed to review it for another magazine, so I won't do that here. But I will say that Naipaul takes it easy on us. His characteristic way of working (harder than it looks) is to go around and talk to people, and he found some good Southerners to talk to. He's properly impressed with our religiosity, and he even kind of admires rednecks—although he may just be saying that to tease the readers of *The New York Review of Books*.

So it's ungrateful of me to complain. But I have to say that Naipaul makes the South just the teeniest bit—well, *boring*. And that's not right, because boring is one thing the South has never been and, please God, never will be.

I'm reminded of another pleasant book called *Journeys Through the South*, written by a journalist named Fred Powledge back about 1977. Powledge had spent part of the 60's pinned down by sniper fire at the University of Mississippi while covering the matriculation of James Meredith, so he was struck by how much Old Dixie had changed. In 1977 he traveled all over and nobody shot at him, even though he did have a beard. (One of my all-time favorite bumper stickers, from South Carolina, says "Don't Shoot, I'm a *Local* Hippie." Think about that.)

Anyway, Powledge's book was upbeat, reflecting the South's mood in those early days of the Carter administration, when the idea of the "Sunbelt" had just begun to catch on and people were talking seriously about silly ideas like how the nation's future lay in the South. Roy Blount Jr. reviewed Powledge's book for *The New York Times* and gave it pretty good marks, complaining only that the picture it painted was so relentlessly *normal*. Blount said something like, "I kept wishing Harry Crews would run by with a handful of snakes."

For those who don't know him, Crews is one of the foremost latter-day practitioners of the Southern grotesque, my candidate for successor to Erskine Caldwell, and author of a book of essays with the great title *Blood and Grits*, which I wish I'd thought of first. And Roy Blount's *Crackers* is, to my mind, one of the funniest and truest books ever written about Our People.

But this is turning into a bibliographical essay. Let me get back to the point, which is that the South is an *odd* place, and any portrait that implies it isn't, lies.

Both Powledge and Naipaul did run into typically weird Southern stuff, but each chose to downplay it—for different reasons, I suspect. Powledge ran across Alvis Lassiter drying a parachute in his front yard, for instance. Now, Fred grew up in Raleigh, so he knew why Lassiter kept a parachute around ("he just liked the way it looked," that's all). In other circumstances he might have paused to savor that; in his book, though, he quickly passes over the subject, presumably because dwelling on it would interfere with the "South Rejoins Union" story he's trying to tell.

When Naipaul found himself being driven around Mississippi by a black man in a hair net, with shaving cream on his face, on the other hand, it was all he could do to maintain his *sang froid*. He doesn't have the advantage of a Southern upbringing to help him just accept the fact that folks have their reasons. Naipaul's a good sport, but he seems to find the episode rather sinister. Apparently he likes to know what's going on, and his book moves right along to characters more easily understood.

My point is that the odd happens all the time in the South, and a true portrait would not only report it, but marvel at it, revel in it. Any picture of the South in the late 20th century, that is, should save a prominent place for the likes of the Reverend Billy C. Wirtz.

That's all wind-up. Here's the pitch.

I've had occasion before to mention the Reverend Billy in these letters. He's a Raleigh boy, a former special-education teacher turned boogie-woogie piano player, 6'4" with a spiky punk haircut, tattoos on most of his visible parts, and a silver earring in the form of a chain saw. He writes his own music, which he describes as "middle of the rude," or "queasy listening." His songs have titles like "Mennonite Surf Party" and "Your Greens Give Me the Blues"; his lyrics run to "Stick out your can / 'Cause here comes the garbage man." His first album, *Salvation Through Polyester*, went nowhere at all, but his second, *Deep-Fried and Sanctified* (just out), got reviewed in *People* magazine and may be a comer.

I caught the Reverend's act one evening last winter at our university's Student Union, and wrote an appreciative review for a regional magazine. He called me up to thank me.

"Wanta be in show business?" he asked.

Are you kidding? Is a wild Indian Catholic? Does the Pope—Yes!

Turns out the Reverend's record company was flying a film crew into Raleigh from Los Angeles to make a music-video of "Teenie Weenie Meanie," a love song addressed to—uh, well, to a lady wrestler. A *midget* lady wrestler. Billy assured me that the video would be "tasteful."

So, on the appointed evening in March, my buddy Fetzer and I drove to Raleigh. We found the Reverend outside the big, cave-like nightclub where the filming was to take place, eating fried chicken and turnip greens off a styrofoam plate and surrounded by his entourage, which that evening included four members of a motorcycle gang. In full colors. *Ugly* boys.

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While we were waiting for the "shoot" (as we show business folk call it), Fetzer and I slipped across the street to grab a sandwich, accompanied by a country-music singer named Pinky Wyoming, who was also there for a shot at glory. Pinky is a *large* woman, with a long blond wig, a pink cowboy hat, and white boots. Fetzer had purchased his entire wardrobe that afternoon for $9.00 at the Abundant Life Thrift Shop. (I liked his pointy shoes best.) I'd come from work, so I was relatively staid in khakis and boots, although I was wearing an orange cap that said "Elvis — Memphis Loves You," with a picture of the King in profile.

"Are y'all in a play?" asked the State U. student working the counter.

"Whaddaya mean, 'play'?" Fetzer demanded. "Somethin' funny about the way I look?"

The poor kid apologized.

"Didja ask them Hell's Angels if *they* was in a play?" Fetzer grumbled, as he walked off with his sandwich.

The kid watched us warily, all the way out.

Back across the street, Billy introduced us to his costar, Diamond Lil, three feet of dynamite with a blond Mohawk haircut, and to her friend and mentor, the Fabulous Moolah. Moolah (whose real name is Lillian) is a personable, 50-ish blonde who was for many years World Champion and now runs a school for lady wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina. We chatted for a while, then went inside where a makeshift ring had been set up.

The Los Angeles film crew, about a dozen of them, were making mysterious chalk marks on the floor and moving lights and cameras around, looking professionally blasé and ready to get back to the Sir Walter Inn and a few lines of coke or something. The scene they were filming that night was the wrestling match at which the singer, Billy, first spies his lady-love, the "Teenie Weenie Meanie," played by Diamond Lil. (The love scenes were filmed the next day at a trailer park in Apex, North Carolina. I had to be at work, alas.) My brief moment in the spotlight came when the Reverend and the motorcycle guys and their women and a baby named — well, it sounded like "Redemption" and maybe it was — when these folk and Fetzer and Pinky and I and assorted other hangers-on watched Moolah and Lil go through some choreographed wrestling moves while we hollered "Kill her! Kill her!" and waved empty beer cups around.

Look for it on MTV. I'm the one in the orange Elvis cap, next to the baby. I almost hate to say it, but there's a sense in which *that's* what the South is all about in 1989. Whatever else it may be, it's not boring.

John Shelton Reed writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and will be holding auditions soon for his entourage.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

The God Biz

◆

For some reason (perhaps God knows why) I recently started receiving packets of postcard advertisements from Media Management's *Ministry: Values for Growing Churches*. "Dear Pastor," the top card began.

I read that an identical packet had been sent to two hundred fifty thousand other "pastors," along with a card from Media Management saying, "building? teaching? preaching? counseling? We can help. Just fill-out this coupon and mail it today. We'll send our new, jumbo package, *Ministry Resources*. No cost. No obligation. No one will call." No kidding.

Did you know that enterprising pastors and priests don't write their own sermons? They rely on *Pulpit Digest*, *Pulpit Resource* ("non-doctrinal — lets you provide your own emphasis"), *Leadership*, *The Clergy Journal*, *Sermons Illustrated* ("Packed with heart-warming, thought-provoking, humorous stories"), The Pastor's Professional Research Service, *Sunday Sermons*, or The Preacher's Illustration Service ("Power-packed illustrations, anecdotes, stories, humor!").

For those who have trouble with not only sermons but the entire worship service, there's "Worship Celebration," "an innovative, new concept for the Worship Service. Words of some of the most widely used worship choruses appear on full color slides with picturesque photography as a backdrop. Gives the local congregation and visitors access to the words of the choruses you sing; eliminates the inconvenience and distraction of songbooks and frees the hands of the congregation so they can focus their energies on participating in the congregational worship; visually encouraging the congregation to praise the Lord; relieves the local church of obtaining copyright permissions." Or ministers can attend a "National Leadership Conference to Strengthen Their Church Through Creative Worship" and "Learn how to provide a worship/celebration experience that speaks to today's Christians, and reaches those who have written off the church as boring or irrelevant."

There's help for church newsletters, too. Did you know that "It's a whole lot easier to *get their attention* when you put funny and tasteful *cartoons* in your bulletins, newsletters, announcements, signs, and visuals"? Well, "Humor will do it for you or your money back." Also, did you ever realize that "If you stopped to read this cartoon, the readers of your church newsletter will, too" (60 cartoons for $17.95)? You can "Save 1/3 and make *your* publications *fabulous* — one ministry newsletter we produce is so popular we get complaints if it is *one* day late in the mail. You will serve your members much better and be a lot happier when they think your stuff is *great*."

I was transfixed by cards for "Relocatable Church Buildings . . . With Permanent Comfort & Quality," fiberglass steeples and baptistries, a "Christian Resources Exhibition" in Washington, DC ("Christian heritage and local area tours — *all* Christian denominations [including tens and twenties] welcome"), the "ClergyCard" (If You Don't Have This Card . . . You're Losing Money!"), "Church Visibility Pins," sample raffle tickets, a free booklet explaining "Why Your Church Might Be Sued," disposable communion cups, and church signs ("Our sign paid for itself in 3 Sundays" — talk about your miracles!). There was an invitation to "Sell part-time . . . make full-time income! Earn $25,000 a year and more in your spare time! No Investment — No Experi-

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ence Required!" (Garrison Keillor calls ministers who have gone into selling "spooks," and claims their mouths are self-winding.)

One terrifying card offered to list recent new residents to any neighborhood in the country. Think about it.

Interested in travel? Sign up four members of your congregation to go to China ($2,095 each) and you go *free*. Or this may interest you: "*You* are personally and cordially invited to become a unitholder/part owner in an exclusive non-denominational, ecumenical, religious, non-profit, tax-exempt, legal corporation."

Churches have come into the computer age with a vengeance. Ministers and priests can now "Get Results With Proven Church Software," keep those tithes coming in with "Computer Software Especially for Churches," and put their faith in "The Pioneer in Church Software Since 1978." They can "Put the Bible in [Their] Computer." And there's no telling *where* they'll stop when they boot up to "Power Church Plus: . . . The Most Powerful Church Computer Software Ever!"

There was one card whose offer I'm finding it nearly impossible to pass up: Meditrend International's skin patch, which enables you to "Control Your Appetite — Help Others — Make Money." Hey, if that's not heaven, what is?

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal.

Letter From Washington

by Samuel Francis

A *Zeitgeist* of Another Color

◆

Among the many questions about the new presidency of George Bush with which the lips of Washington were afroth this spring was whether Lee Atwater is for real. The thirty-seven-year-old head of the Republican National Committee who made the name of Willie Horton as familiar to American households as the Domino's Pizza gremlin is one of the few genuinely interesting people in an administration that seems chiefly notable for its skills in paper shuffling. Mr. Atwater is a gifted amateur guitar player, an assiduous student of the political thought of Aristotle and Machiavelli, and an utterly pitiless political consigliere whose genius at designing electoral landslides for the aspirants wise enough to hire him derives from his understanding that citizens usually vote against, rather than for, a candidate. But the question that Washington pundits were pondering this year had less to do with Mr. Atwater's musical talents, his philosophy, or his skills as a campaign Svengali, than with the honesty of his announced commitment to lead black voters out of their bondage in a Democratic Egypt toward the promised land of the Grand Ole Party.

Mr. Atwater would seem to be an unlikely Moses. The native South Carolinian began his political career as an intern for Sen. Strom Thurmond, and many of the clients whom he has favored with his professional counsel over the years have probably wondered if Mr. Thurmond, in his later career, had not gone a bit soft on the civil rights issue. In the 1970's Mr. Atwater was an enthusiast for a conservative-Republican strategy that sought the votes of what he called "the populists . . . lower- and working-class whites" whose "chosen leaders were hard-core segregationists." Having done his part in making this strategy a success through the solidification of formerly Democratic white Southern or ethnic working-class voters in the Republican presidential constituency, Mr. Atwater would appear to be entirely at sea in any serious effort to sway the political hearts and minds of black citizens.

Nevertheless, Mr. Atwater embarked on his mission manfully. He denounced ex-Klansman David Duke in Louisiana and eagerly accepted an invitation to join the board of trustees at historically black Howard University. But when Howard students exploded in protest of Mr. Atwater's appointment (as well as of the crumbling walls of Howard's dormitories), the shadows of reality began to creep across his vision of a color-blind Republican Party.

Mr. Atwater, of course, did not invent the idea of "luring" (as Republican strategists often put it) blacks into GOP ranks. Back in the 1970's his predecessor at the RNC, Bill Brock, also talked about it, and more recently the idea has become a staple of the Republican banquet oratory of George Bush, Ronald Reagan, Newt Gingrich, Jack Kemp, and Bill Bennett, among other stalwarts of the party.

Their strategy is simple and appealing. As Mr. Atwater himself puts it, "we have entered into a post-civil rights era, civil rights are not the driving force," and a growing black middle class will find a party that appeals to its economic interests, long thwarted by liberal paternalism, attractive. With few memories of segregation and with fundamentally conservative values on the family, crime, schools, and neighborhoods, middle-class blacks ought to recognize that the future belongs to the party of Lincoln. Whatever the errors of the Republican past, such as some very strenuous and unpleasant opposition to civil rights legislation, American blacks should see that only the Republicans can realize Martin Luther King's dream of judging people by the content of their character rather than by the color of their skins.

The exponents of this strategy can adduce an impressive string of black community leaders and intellectuals to support it. But there are a few inconvenient truths about blacks in contemporary America that ought to cool Republican and conservative enthusiasm for the strategy. The insurgency against Mr. Atwater at Howard University this spring suggests some of them.

The students who seized buildings at Howard, prevented Mr. Atwater from speaking, and refused to shut up or sit down or go away until he resigned from the board were about as middle class in their backgrounds as blacks in the United States today can be. They also were intensely aware of the racial ambiguities of Mr. Atwater's political biography. They knew all about the Willie Horton business and showed no appreciation for the lame line that Horton's race was not explicitly mentioned in the original TV ads. Mr. Atwater is anything but a fool. He knew he had walked into a trap and that if he hung around trying to explain himself, he would be strung up by his heels and exposed. His whole strategy and plans for the next several years would be washed away in the next few days. He therefore did what any astute disciple of Machiavelli would do; he resigned and thereby defused the

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whole issue. The students went back to their dilapidated dormitories in the belief they had routed the foe.

Mr. Atwater's embroglio at Howard ought to suggest to him and other Republican strategists that the black middle class is not about to desert the party and the programs that created it, and that it is deeply aware that the party is Democratic and the programs socialist. "Middle-class blacks," say political scientists Michael Dawson of the University of Michigan and Gary Orefield of Chicago, "more than poor blacks, have been the beneficiaries of court and legislative interventions in the private sector, moving up the economic ladder on affirmative action programs, minority set-asides and other programs often opposed by Republicans." They point out that middle-class blacks, far more than whites, have benefited from direct government employment. "A much higher percentage of blacks have achieved middle-class status through the public sector than whites." Whatever the black middle class might think about the social and moral issues, economically it wouldn't exist without democratic socialism and its legacy, and its support for free-market, small-government candidates and ideas would be tantamount to class suicide.

Moreover, say professors Dawson and Orefield, middle-class blacks are more conscious of racial and housing discrimination than poor blacks. After all, it's the former who are trying to move out of the inner city and into white neighborhoods, and it's probably fair to infer that black racial consciousness is most intense among the middle class. Just as nationalism served the psychic, social, and political needs of the Euro-American bourgeoisie in the 19th century, so a species of racialism (sometimes none too subtle) serves black middle-class aspirations today.

But the Republican strategy to attract black votes ignores this consciousness, just as it ignores American national consciousness in its prattle about "global democracy," human rights, and a global economy. Mr. Atwater, Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, and Newt Gingrich love to talk about the Lincoln legacy and the ideals of Martin Luther King, but that legacy and those ideals, at least in popular mythology, are liberal, egalitarian, and universalist. The racial consciousness espoused by black leaders such as Jesse Jackson is a horse of another color. It doesn't want to integrate with white institutions but to legitimize nonwhite ones. It doesn't want to join Western culture but to extirpate it. It doesn't want to share and share alike, as nice liberals and neoconservatives want, but to dominate. That's why Mr. Jackson ran around with explicit racists like Louis Farrakhan, and that's why Mr. Farrakhan can meet comfortably with explicit white racists like Tom Metzger.

It's also why Mr. Jackson wants blacks to start calling themselves "African-Americans," in the tradition of Stokeley Carmichael and Rap Brown. It's a label that helps to delegitimize black inclusion in American society and to formulate a new identity based on racial solidarity with the nonwhite peoples of the world. Dr. King himself planted the seeds of this growth with his observation, in his *Letter From the Birmingham Jail*, that the American black in the civil rights movement "has been swept in by what the Germans call the *Zeitgeist*, and with his black brothers of Africa, and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, he is moving with a sense of cosmic urgency toward the promised land of racial justice." But you can't ride the tiger of racial consciousness for long before it slips its reins and begins hunting for something other than the right to sit in the front of the bus.

American blacks are indeed rejecting liberalism, as are American whites. But that doesn't mean that either group will find the universalism and egalitarianism that today travels the country under the name of conservatism any more to their taste. In regurgitating the premises of the same indigestible liberalism, Mr. Atwater and his *wunderkinder* at the Republican National Committee are walking into a trap that Aristotle and Machiavelli would have been wise enough to avoid.

Samuel Francis is deputy editorial page editor of The Washington Times.

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Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

Just How Monarchical is Monsieur Mitterrand?

◆

Ever since Machiavelli, and probably long before that, successful statesmen have known that a plentiful stock of mendacity, as well as guile, are essential for anyone wishing to get ahead in politics. But what many of them may have forgotten during their arduous climb to the summit is that the often bitter accusations they level against their adversaries during the years of ascent can later be turned around and used against themselves when at last they have reached the top.

François Mitterrand's spectacular career offers a classic illustration of this phenomenon. A quarter of a century ago, in 1964, when he was already posing as a "leftist" candidate against the "usurper" de Gaulle (so termed because he had connived in a military putsch before burying the Fourth and creating the Fifth Republic), he attacked the General's mode of government in a book entitled *Le Coup d'état permanent*. Today he would prefer to forget that he had ever written that blistering critique of autocratic government, for there was hardly a charge he then made against de Gaulle that could not be made against the present French president's often peremptory *modus gubernandi*.

Last November the Paris weekly *Le Point* published a cover story entitled "*Mitterrand — Le Roi et sa Cour*" in which His would-be Majesty, dressed in a 17th-century perruque, matched by regal cane, Versailles slippers, and silk stockings, was displayed making his haughty way along an unrolled red carpet. The accompanying articles contained a number of pointed charges. The uncrowned king of the republic was accused of self-adulation ("Never has narcissism assumed such a scope, not even under Giscard, who used the attributes of power rather than power itself"), of a dangerous "Caesarian drift," of an inordinate love of pomp and pageantry, of favoritism, of rule by a tiny clique of "insiders," and even of nepotism ("The surveillance of Africa has been entrusted to one of his sons, Jean-Christophe; diplomacy to a very old friend, Roland Dumas; special [i.e., top-secret] missions to yet another intimate friend, François de Grossouvre, and sometimes — more rarely of late — to his brothers Jacques and Robert. As in the time of the Capetians, the republican monarch's power extends to the whole of his family and to all of his closest friends").

Shortly before *Le Point* came out with this critical assessment, one of France's best radio journalists, Philippe Alexandre, had reached much the same conclusion in a best-selling book — *Paysages de campagne* (Campaign Landscapes) — composed of scenes he had witnessed, most of them during the election campaign of the previous May and June. The collection began with one describing how he and Philippe Labro, director of RTL (Radio-Télévision Luxembourg — France's most listened-to radio station), had one day been received by the French president at the Elysée Palace. "Mitterrand seated himself on a couch and invited Labro and myself to sit down beside him. The others" — those whom Alexandre had previously termed "the courtier-collaborators" — "remained standing at attention, the women included. From time to time the president would toss them a bit of bone: 'I have not been too long?' And all would immediately protest, falling all over themselves like kennel dogs. Perfect, he had been perfect, luminous, concise, imperial. He swallowed these sugary tid-bits with no show of surprise, as though it was his daily fare."

What makes this situation so piquant is not simply the obvious fact that the neosocialist Monsieur Mitterrand is now walking in the footsteps of the republican monarch — *le grand Charles* — he once castigated in such acrimonious terms; it is also the ironic realization that the biographical wheel has come full circle; for this same François Mitterrand is an older version of the Angoulême schoolboy who, like his father and his brothers, felt a passing sympathy for the extreme right-wing (and usually monarchist) Action Française.

About François Mitterrand's later "conversion" to socialism there is a great deal to be said — far more than there is room for here. But what was particularly intriguing, at least for me, about the accusations leveled against the uncrowned president's monarchical pretensions was his own querulous reaction. François Mitterrand, we were informed by persons in a position to know, was absolutely livid over the special issue of *Le Point*, and furious that anybody could harbor such misguided notions about a person whose staunchly republican credentials were impeccable.

It is here that one can measure the considerable gap that separates François Mitterrand from the rashly decried man whose enormous powers he has inherited. The 1958 Constitution of the Fifth Republic, as is well known, was tailor-made for Charles de Gaulle, even though its crowning refinement — having the president elected by the people of France rather than by a "grand assembly" of notables comprising the two houses of parliament — was not added until later (the autumn of 1962).

Some months after de Gaulle's election to the presidency (December 1958), the *Canard enchaîné* — which, unless I am mistaken, is Europe's oldest satirical weekly (it was founded back in 1914) — began publishing a charmingly illustrated feature called "*La Cour.*" Written by André Ribaud in the baroque style of Saint-Simon, this marvelously old-fashioned chronicle of the goings-on at the Elysée Palace was a sustained *tour de force* that the author managed to keep up not only for a full decade, but even to prolong for several years, after Georges Pompidou had succeeded the general, with a subsequent feature called "*La Régence.*" De Gaulle, who occasionally had offending newspapers seized thanks to the emergency powers granted to him during the Algerian-wartime years (1958-1962), never once attempted to have the *Canard enchaîné* suppressed, knowing that it would have been the height of folly and tantamount to political suicide. In fact, he was an assiduous reader of "*La Cour,*" and far from being upset or miffed, he seems to have derived an Olympian amusement at finding himself thus compared, week after week, with Louis XIV.

Even in France few persons, I suspect, realize just how Olympian that distance could sometimes be. For example, on April 21, 1961, which hap-

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pened to be a Friday, four frustrated French generals who were bent on keeping Algeria French staged a military putsch in Algiers. Immediately metropolitan France was swamped with wild rumors, according to which *les paras* (the paratroopers) were about to drop out of the sky over Paris, or had even landed to prepare a bridgehead near Marseille. On Saturday morning a panicky Prime Minister Michel Debré had to go on the air — the television screen had not yet replaced the radio set as a means of mass communication — and plead with his countrymen, asking them to go out to the airport of Orly by any available means — in their automobiles, on bicycles, in vans, trucks, or carts, indeed "*à pied ou à cheval*" (on foot or on horseback, as the wits promptly mocked) in order to block the runways and prevent General Salan and his colleagues from landing their armed men and dangerous munitions. And indeed, for the next three days everyone remained on tenter-hooks, prepared for the grim news that the invaders, like trans-Mediterranean Martians, had landed at last.

But what, meanwhile, was de Gaulle doing? The answer is simple: he spent a good part of that critical weekend in his country house at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises . . . reading a book! Yes, a book about the "government of men" written by Pierre Massenet, a former aeronautic engineer and wartime resister who, after the liberation, had been given the thankless task of holding the "red" seaport of Marseille against local Communist militants, who at one point had wanted to seize the railway marshalling yards at Aix-en-Provence and had been kept from doing so by the planting of mines (this during the unforgettably "hot" summer of 1947). Well, not only did de Gaulle read Massenet's book, he was so impressed that he took the trouble to write him a letter of appreciation. It was dated, as I recall, Saturday, April 22 — which is to say, during the very middle of the Algerian generals' insurrection, when one would have supposed that de Gaulle's attention was focused on more urgent matters. "*Curieux, n'est-ce pas?*" Massenet later said to me, showing me the letter. Curious, indeed!

Though there is no telling what that extraordinary political chameleon, François Mitterrand, is likely to do next, I very much doubt that he will ever reach this altitude of Olympian aloofness. None of the crises he has so far had to face have been anywhere near as dangerous as those de Gaulle had to deal with. But the fact remains that because the Constitution of 1958 was tailor-made for de Gaulle, it instituted a post of deputy-leader or "second-in-command" — the premiership. It was to be the job of the prime minister to deal with the unruly parliament (which de Gaulle basically disliked intensely), to take care of irksome administrative chores — in a word, to do the "dirty work" of daily governing. The devoted Michel Debré understood this perfectly, stoically swallowing his most cherished ideas and principles (up until then he had been a fervent champion of a French Algeria) and then retiring without a murmur of complaint when the Master signified to him that his time was up and that someone of greater intellectual calibre (Georges Pompidou) was going to succeed him.

Eventually de Gaulle's fondness for Pompidou turned into bitter hatred, when he realized that his chosen "instrument" had a will of his own and — oh, sacrilege of sacrileges! — was getting ready to succeed him.

This is why the monarchical analogy, in Mitterrand's case, strikes me as being as misleading as it is enlightening. The present rivalry that exists between the harassed premier, Michel Rocard — the hardworking beaver who has to do the dirty work and take the blame when things go badly — and the aloof François Mitterrand, ever ready and indeed of an eagle-eyed determination to seize the credit when things go well, is nothing really new, even though it has been built into the very heart of the Fifth Republic's Constitution. The clash of wills — the bitter rivalry that so often divides father and son, the potential "heir" from the reigning family head — is an ancient one and as old as Oedipus.

In the entertaining *Bebète-Show*, which occasionally precedes the 8 p.m. news round-up on France's first TV channel and in which the country's major political figures are all given partly animal faces, Mitterrand now appears in the guise of a frog, and Michel Rocard in that of a leaf-clad "joker" or court fool. The relationship of lord and knave, of *Seigneur* and *bouffon*, is thus wondrously transcribed, and subtly exploited by Jean Amadou (the author of the witty script) by having Joker-Rocard address his lord and master, Dieu, in outlandish terms as, "O, Light of the Universe!," "Divine Fount of Sagacity!," "Beacon of the Celestial Depths!," "Glorious Crankshaft of the Cosmos!," and so on.

Mitterrand, in answer to journalists' questioning, has said that he doesn't mind in the least being turned into a frog (slightly reminiscent of Kenneth Grahame's Toad of Toad Hall). This kind of comic satire, after all, is flattering to his vanity and ego, whether would-be regal or demigodlike. It helps alleviate the feeling of irascible ennui to which, insiders claim, François Mitterrand is increasingly prone, as a septuagenarian who, notwithstanding appearances — having himself escorted in the street by some ravishing young lady or making furtive trips to Venice — knows that his is a mostly spent force and that the reins, willy-nilly, are slipping from his hands.

Curtis Cate is a historian and biographer who lives in Paris.

Letter From Ann Arbor

by William Rice

Pizza Etc.

◆

On the drive in, there's no sign saying, "Welcome to Ann Arbor, Michigan's Boom Town." But the evidence is hard to miss, especially if you've just driven from the war zone that is Detroit. (United States murder capital for years running.) On the outskirts of Ann Arbor there's a lot of what a horticulturist I know calls "landscraping." On what were once working farms, builders are spiking down high-tech research parks and townhouse subdivisions in the pricy nouvelle-Williamsburg mode. Downtown, smart European cars pull away from the Laura Ashley shop. The drivers seem oblivious to the occasional bumpersticker on a tradesman's van:

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But that's in keeping with Ann Arbor's rise in the era of the Rust Belt. The city was never betrothed to the state's auto industry. It has long refused suitors, and now it has health and wealth to show for its independence. Lots of imaginative people and small energetic companies, most of which you've never heard of, have a stake in the new prosperity, as do special research divisions of large corporations, such as Schlumberger and Chrysler.

Entwine all these in the scientific and professional tentacles of the University of Michigan, and you get stability. Yet, for all this, Ann Arbor seems reluctant to acknowledge, let alone be proud of, its recently elevated station. It is as if the city and citizens would rather suppress their birth pangs than celebrate new life. Living here for two years, I've come to wonder why.

It's easy to admire Ann Arbor's modesty about its business life and the sentiment that says, "Well, if you're looking for name recognition, you'd better go elsewhere." But you have to take exception the minute you turn into a big corporate complex just off Plymouth Road.

There stands the world headquarters of Domino's Pizza. Tom Monahan, the founder of this fast-food empire, has faithfully projected the architectural style of Frank Lloyd Wright onto a building the size of several airplane hangars. In the remote theology of American architecture, Monahan has no doubt committed heresy. But to us regular blokes, the thin, deeply red brick, the long slices of windows, and the corrugated copper roof are fresh and pleasing.

Again, overall, Ann Arborites don't seem much taken with the local boy's making good. Tom Monahan seems a trifle obsessed, not only with Wright but with sports, public life, and antique automobiles. Monahan's passion for sports extends from his ownership of the Detroit Tigers to an insistence on regular athletic events — and clean living — for all his employees. And Monahan could hardly be more active in mainstream civic life, especially during the Christmas holiday season.

It is true that the pizza magnate spent over $8 million at auction on Ettore Bugatti's personal limousine, a yellow and black, hand-built, 16-cylinder road locomotive. But the Domino car collection, open to the public at low cost, is otherwise marked not by ostentation but a decidedly catholic taste. Alongside a vintage Packard town car sits a World War II Willys, a 1920's delivery truck, and a tiny red BMW Isetta — like a rounded icebox with its front-opening door. (Monahan is now making bold to restore an AMC Pacer, one of the few distinctive cars of the 1970's.)

But, as I say, all this doesn't sit well with certain Ann Arborites. As a point of pride they will even order pizzas from rival firms — local small fry whose pies aren't as varied, dependable, or good as Monahan's fare. For the local elite that prides itself on being above profit and spectacle, Tom Monahan's orange and blue dominos will remain a symbol of A2's unwelcome new phase, while for the rest of us, Ann Arbor seems like a city for the 1980's, big enough for Monahan and everyone else.

The Ann Arbor contingent that is so reluctant to celebrate the city's boom would be familiar on sight to anyone who has recently lived in a university town. A vast number — easily thousands — of Ann Arborites emphatically do not live in the 1980's, but in the 1960's. In a nonacademic town they would have molted and kept the faith in harmless ways like listening to Byrds albums, but here their colony is so large and noisy that they need not shed a thing.

Ann Arbor's unsteady balance of the 1960's and 1980's — let us say, of the life-rejecting and life-affirming — probably explains why this healthy spot in a declining industrial region remains bashful and uncertain of its identity. At this writing it is hard to imagine a reconciliation between the city's New Left hangers-on and the ambitious newcomers. But the two flocks do mingle, mainly at the Farmer's Market in antique Kerrytown, the city's only certified yuppie district. There the Nicaragua activists rub shoulders with the BMW set, and to complete the irony who should be watching but the most original Ann Arborites of all, the ones lately being displaced by the condos and tech centers — the Midwestern farmers and their wives and children. One may wonder what the farmers think as they pocket dollar bills from the boomers and the doomers alike. Probably they don't care a pea, as long as land taxes stay low.

The special qualities of the Ann Arbor's Farmer's Market suggests a cure for the clumsiness of the growing city. For starters, this farmer's market is the real thing. It happens only twice a week, only local farmers are allowed to rent stalls, and they can sell only what they themselves grow. No docking at the Detroit food warehouses and loading flats of California tomatoes. The tomatoes, therefore, and the broccoli, the strawberries, and the cider, actually have flavor, and the local grower alone takes home local money.

This, of course, is in almost every particular the food-sector opposite of the Domino's pizza empire. But acceptance of the inconsistency is central to Ann Arbor's — even America's — coming of age. For beneath the agrarian model of the marketplace and the corporate model of Domino's delivery truck is the foundation of individual effort and commitment to superior quality. Once effort and quality are assured, materials themselves must dictate the ideal means of distribution. Good strawberries don't ship well; good pizzas do.

This lesson, which could deliver Ann Arbor from its cultural schizophrenia, will be lost on the socialists at the Nicaragua table at the Farmer's Market. They will go on hectoring passersby, giving money and putting on street theater to support Juigalpa, which was once Ann Arbor's sister city in Nicaragua. But in this — particularly in the "was" — one finds cause for hope. Last year, the citizenry woke up and elected a Republican mayor who promptly terminated the A2-Sandinista connection.

At first I thought the vote was a fluke. But I see now that it was of a piece in a city that simultaneously houses new research centers, the Farmer's Market, socialist collective living cooperatives, fresh-clipped newcomers, and the enormous and diverse University of Michigan. The more these forces respond to each other, the more mature the city will become, and the less it will seem to command that one pick between 1960's gloomtown

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and 1980's boomtown. Ann Arbor offers both in a big way. But it is growing up. It's due for a new pair of shoes and pants soon—and howzabout a suit and tie this time around?

William Rice is a graduate student in English at the University of Michigan.

Letter From Myself

by Juliana Geran Pilon

A Plea for Choice

◆

It is heartening to learn that economic growth is largest in countries where the government is least meddlesome. Such information is of great significance to the utilitarian argument for liberty, for it hurts the Marxist where he bleeds the most: in showing the *material* superiority of capitalism, which is constantly denied in the Communist press.

To Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, however, this is rather beside the point. To him, and to people like me, efficiency and abundance do not provide a sufficient argument for capitalism; in fact, they may even serve to obscure the more basic elements of the system of natural liberty.

I find it disturbing, for example, to read that Friedrich von Hayek believes that "the whole argument for freedom, or the greater part of the argument for freedom, rests on the fact of our ignorance." Hayek's line of thinking has severe limitations. For clearly he is led to admit that "if we were all-wise, or if any one person among us were all-wise, the argument for freedom would become very weak indeed." This implies that freedom is merely a means to other ends, such as prosperity and scientific knowledge, even "the common good."

To be sure, the argument from ignorance is brought to the defense of the market by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*. It is also important to William Godwin, an early British anarchist who, in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793), reasoned as follows: since no man can know everything, and all men are fallible, we must repudiate centralized government. But here Godwin goes a step further (and I with him): even if someone *were* found who was "all-wise," that superman would still have no right to coerce others. "Countries," writes Godwin, "exposed to the perpetual interference of decrees, exhibit within their boundaries the mere phantoms of men." Respect for private judgment is not subordinate to prosperity or indeed to anything else, nor is it merely a useful device. It is a precondition of human dignity and therefore of our self-respect.

Solzhenitsyn attacks excessive liberalism or what he calls "anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of everything that exists," and the concept that "the basis of government and social science . . . could be defined as rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and enforced autonomy of man from any higher force above him." I disagree with the latter part of his argument. My credo rests on a commitment to the autonomy of man, on his individuality as the locus of choice, and the necessary condition for any exercise of virtue.

Autonomy is no easy task: to choose is to suffer the consequences of ignorance, the agony of indecision, the responsibility of defeat. To love *all* men is possible for a Christ alone—I intend not at all to feel for my neighbor what I feel for my children, and I shall not expect him to do the impossible either. But the emotions I have for him will depend on who he is—which is to say, on what *he* does.

For what is autonomy if not the self-definition of man expressing his very dignity in the tantalizing, mystifying marketplace that is his daily action? Without autonomy, man is nothing. Stripped of his soul—or, if you prefer, his will—God Himself will not be able to rescue him, for nothing will be left, or nothing but name, rank, and serial number.

The present-day college graduate, a veteran of beer bashes and TV journalism, may have some difficulty understanding what Solzhenitsyn means by "the forces of Evil [which] have begun their decisive offensive." Moreover, as our self-appointed wizards in the media remind Solzhenitsyn that he is really a 19th-century man and would really be much happier under the tsar, we tend to overlook the simpler sentences in his speech that would ring clear to the unobstructed ear.

When he warns that "America itself would fall prey to a genocide similar to the one perpetrated in Cambodia in our days," he speaks literally. In the 60's we said it wouldn't happen. Over a million murders later (three million? do the numbers fail us?), we are still unwilling to cry out to the skies and the murders continue—innocent men, women, and children. How can one blame Solzhenitsyn for finding his metaphors in the vocabulary of eschatology, when no medieval imagination could have matched what is only a jet flight away from the headquarters of *The Washington Post*—the now merely embarrassing Holocaust of South Asia.

If Solzhenitsyn reminds us of God, it is perhaps because he has looked the Devil in the eye. What he has seen is not merely the terror of death, for death has its element of grace, reminding us as it does that ours is a most temporary gift, one that we must guard well and use tenderly. It is perhaps because only by speaking of God can he tell us of his love for man. It is not just capitalism, Adam Smith's "system of natural freedom," that is at stake here, but all we have ever held sacred, all we are. We may never be able to love again.

Juliana Geran Pilon is director of The National Forum Foundation.

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LITERATURE

The Danish Swift

by Jesse Bier

Why, after half a century, Peter Freuchen's *Arctic Adventure* has to be rescued from virtual oblivion is one of the true puzzles of literary anniversaries. Not quite a best-seller in its day, it nonetheless went into five printings and then fell, almost precipitously, into its curious obscurity. Retrospective itself as it looked back to Freuchen's Greenland and Baffin Bay experiences of a generation before, its quaintness may have told on it. The truth is that *Arctic Adventure* is an unpretentious 20th-century *Gulliver's Travels*, a rich and evocative work, energetic though never hectic or harried. In brief, last year marked the semicentennial of a work at once exciting and reflective, a book that must not be permanently lost from view.

It is not possible to know how closely Freuchen modeled himself on Jonathan Swift's Gulliver. There are no explicit literary references anywhere in *Arctic Adventure*. But at the outset there seems to be an insistent levy on Swift's flamboyant urinary episode in Lilliput, though the effect is inverted in *Arctic Adventure*. It is the native folk, not the narrator, who are the perpetrators: washing their hair and clothing in, well, what is one of nature's best cleansers.

There are other domestic reversals, less elemental but just as piquant and just as Swiftian, such as the coffee custom.

> The hostess in this part of Greenland always serves a saucer as well as a cup, and etiquette demands that the cup be so well filled that it spills over into the saucer. As a matter of fact, coffee must be sipped from the saucer rather than the cup if one would conform to Eskimo standards. One merely holds the cup and pours coffee from it into the saucer which is held daintily with three fingers outstretched. The sugar is hard, lump crystal and is not put into the coffee but held in the mouth like candy. At parties one is much admired for his dexterity at sipping coffee, sucking sugar, and gossiping over the latest scandals at one and the same time.

All we need next is controversy about which end of the breakfast egg to crack before opening it—remember Big Endians and Little Endians?—to be forcefully reminded of something.

If the literary parallels are there, however, they are not obtrusive. Freuchen is simply, though cannily, reporting to us. He is at his best in this vein when he records moments of super-civilized or rational mores among these allegedly primitive peoples (or are they suprarational Houyhnhnms?). After a communal walrus kill, Freuchen mistakenly thanks someone for an allotment of meat he is given; later he is taken aside and confidentially rebuked by the harpooner.

> "Up in our country we are human! And since we are human we help each other. We don't like to hear anybody say thanks for that. If I get something today, you may get it tomorrow. Some men never kill anything because they are seldom lucky or they may not be able to run or row as fast as others. Therefore they would feel unhappy to have to be thankful to their fellows all the time. And it would not be fun for the big hunter to feel that other men were constantly humbled by him. Then his pleasure would die. Up here we say that by gifts one makes slaves, and by whips one makes dogs."

The rebuke is good-natured, as is almost all native behavior, filled with as much benignity and generosity as it is with paradox. There is even a quantum of good nature, or certainly casualness, accruing to occasional and permissible murder. When a thief and local tyrant is finally shot by someone, that person is tacitly approved of rather than condemned. The mother of a socially incorrigible son eventually garrotes him to end his criminal pranksterism—and her act is not merely condoned but honored. The harpoon homicide of a wife-beater and boaster by a widower who was incessantly tantalized by the victim is similarly accepted and endorsed, as Freuchen finds for himself.

> "Quanguaq," I said in a stern voice, "I hear that you are a murderer."
>
> "Let others tell of it," he answered. "One never likes to brag."

Freuchen upbraids the killer, who has acquired the victim's wife; in fact, Freuchen makes considerable headway in implanting guilt and shame until the wife in question comes forward to exonerate and welcome her new husband as a decided improvement over her first. Freuchen's strict imperatives dissolve rapidly in the general atmosphere of practicality.

It is this theme of practicality that

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Freuchen emphasizes in his book, centering it for us as the core of the radically simple and emotive systems of the natives. He himself ceases to struggle against the pristine functionalism of their ways, which he accepts at last as natural and healthy.

He goes so far as to eventually marry a native woman, Navarana. There seems to be real love between them, and in both of them emotion and reserve are often wonderfully combined. After one of his long and perilous trips—with Knud Rasmussen, crossing the north Greenland ice caps, a historic "first"—Freuchen returns home, staggering in more dead than alive.

> When I went into my house I saw everyone but Navarana.
> "Where is Navarana?" I asked.
> "She is upstairs working," Arnanguaq answered.
> I yelled: "Navarana! Navarana! I am home!"
> "What of it?" I heard her voice saying from above. "Somebody is cleaning a few skins!"
> After a few minutes she came down, hurried across the room and out of the door. Not until everybody had gone would she consent to come back and greet me. Then she explained that she had been afraid she might embarrass me, and also she had no way of showing how happy she really was.

There is high charge here, though contained—and all the higher *because* it is contained. For all such moments the reader learns to reckon with the ideal of public restraint and the principle of privacy—perhaps the most exotic or alien concept, especially for Americans, in the whole book.

Along with everything else, there is comedy—inherent comedy and satirically pointed humor. In general, and predictably enough, Freuchen provides the humor of incongruity, but the effects are piquant. Navarana is sometimes the subject of cross-cultural humor, usually when out of her element, as when she accompanies her husband on distant trips.

> The night before arriving in Tassiussak we stopped with Abel, the great hunter. As usual, his house was spotless, his daughters in white underwear, and Navarana was much impressed. She told me that she thought the household so pretentious that she ought to mention it to the women in criticism. When I asked her to explain, she said anyone ought to know that men bought fine white linen only to make sails for seal hunting. Perhaps the white men would be disgusted and cease manufacturing the linen if they learned that ignorant women used the fabric to make themselves beautiful beneath their outside garments. I assured her that the white men would be only too delighted to weave more, and that she herself would be dressed in similar luxury as soon as we reached Tassiussak. She smiled, as people do when they doubt and hope simultaneously.

That last effect is pure Freuchen, the shrewd and generous punctuations he shows at frequent intervals.

Cultural contrast continues to be a rich vein of humor for Freuchen to mine. In one instance, it may be the misinterpretation of handshaking in Greenland:

> More men and women and children rushed out to meet us and we stopped to greet them. Mitseq and Itukusunguaq were embarrassed by the practice of taking off the mitten and extending the right hand to be shaken. They had already mentioned it to me, and the much-traveled Mitseq had explained that it was to indicate that if the right hand was tired the strangers would help to support it.

In another, when the Freuchens visit Denmark, it concerns the king himself, who cuts a formal and, to Navarana, foolish figure in a moment barely redeemed by her husband:

> Navarana turned to me: "Is that man really the King we have heard so much about? How can he think for everybody in Denmark if he is stupid enough to suppose I have any opinions about this magnificent land after only one day's stay?"
> "What does she say?" asked the mighty man.
> I translated freely: "Your Majesty, she thinks it is wonderful and grand!"
> "I thought so!" said the King, and was content.

Again it is a passing phrase, "translated freely," that certifies Freuchen's quick sophistication (even if the scene is redacted, as I suspect).

Freuchen also has a penchant for comic understatement. In a particularly grueling episode toward the end of his Arctic sojourn, he finds himself trapped during a gale in a sort of groove he has fashioned for protection directly under his sled. The groove threatens to become a grave when he discovers that he is frozen solid inside, and Freuchen decides "to sacrifice one of my hands, let it freeze and use it as a spade to dig my way out." He says then, "I pitied myself, as I had plenty of uses for both hands." He does not succeed with using his hand as a shovel or with using frozen excrement as a chisel, but manages to punch through a hole with an icicled pick of bearskin. His head gets stuck in the passageway, however, with only half of his face out.

> Unfortunately my whiskers were directly beneath the broad frozen mud runner and, as there is always moisture about the mouth, they froze fast to the runner and I could not move either forward or backward. I was so doubled up in my grave that I had no strength to do a thing . . . How long I lay in that cramped position I do not know. Perhaps I fainted. The snow had covered the upper part of my face, filled my eyes and nose so that I could scarcely breathe. The air was a vicious mixture of flying snow and, as I inhaled it, I knew that I could not last for long.

There follows another brief seriocomic divagation—

> My thoughts turned to my

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> home in Denmark, to my mother, and to my good friend Magdalene who had not written to me. I decided that I would have to write her.

—after which, by a last violent effort, he pulls himself back all the way in. Eventually, by renewed strategy and effort, he escapes, but not without the consequence of a frozen and then gangrenous foot. Inside his kamik boot the throbbing becomes unendurable.

> Inuyak pulled my kamik off—it was full of blood. The stitches had cut through the flesh, and the wound lay open.
>
> This was disconcerting to look at, so I made Inuyak take needles and sew the ends together.

It is that gritty understated disconcertion, which almost makes us laugh, that certifies to Freuchen's comic defenses throughout his experiences.

We are so absorbed by the curiosities and ardors of his life in the north that we scarcely heed certain historical and official dimensions of it. Freuchen's ice cap crossings by dogsled became part of our international Arctic folklore, but he hardly alludes to them. When he graduates from trader and adventurer to governor of Thule province, a reward for having secured North Greenland for Denmark, he is so quick in his notation that many readers may fail to register the fact.

> Since 1912 the Danish explorer, Lauge Koch, has been up there and has changed some of the names. I have been interviewed about it, but it makes no difference to me what names are applied. My enjoyment was in being there, not in having been there, and if they place more worthy names on points of interest I shall not turn a pin to prevent it.

"My enjoyment was in being there, not in having been there" represents not only a winning attitude in general but the essential point of view for a writer aiming to give us the immediacy of the retrospective experience, wanting above all for us to be submerged and lost in the alien wild. That submergence or lost-ness applies to Freuchen himself, of course, even more than to his readers. Because, although we do not know so very much about him personally as we may wish to know, the 467-page book itself indicates enough of his withheld motives, if only between its many lines.

What we do notice, ineluctably, is a latent misanthropy—or anti-Caucasianism—that propels Freuchen away from civilization and that connects again with Swift. The feeling does not quite convert him into a Gulliver who experiences revulsion back home away from the Houyhnhnms, although he certainly does feel telltale depression on trips back to Denmark and wishes compulsively to return to the North. His misanthropy, which he at last overcomes in himself, is more delicate than it is in Swift, and a little more diffuse. He struggles with it, turning to symbolic generalization to take the curse off his antisocial instincts.

> After two or three days their dogs would go no farther, and they were compelled to butcher the poorest ones and throw them to their fellows. Yet among dogs are found characters almost as various as among men. Some dogs do not give a damn what they eat; some will eat their own mothers, as I have often witnessed, and others will starve to death before touching the bodies of their teammates.

He knows what he is about and he knows himself, finally—including the true nature of his escapism. His flight from Denmark has been in great part a flight from sexual love generally and, even after his marriage to Navarana, flight specifically from a certain "Magdalene" (no made up name, for Nabokovians or amateur Freudians), a mature woman of Copenhagen, herself suffering nervous disorders. Freuchen acknowledges the deepest romantic upsurge he has ever felt in Magdalene's company, and he subsequently remarks:

> I felt immediately inferior to a woman whose weakness was unimpressed with my strength or any of the things I was able to do. My place, I felt anew, was not here with people who could see through me, but up there in the North. I would go back, I thought, and never come again to Denmark.

Hogwash, or sealfoam: he not only comes back to Denmark and to Magdalene, after Navarana dies, but he corresponds with her in the interim and, as we have seen, is inspired to life by thoughts of her in his direst extremity. He returns to her, in fact, as to his anima; she becomes his second wife and the surrogate mother of his daughter. The exhilarative triumph at the very end is of a special kind.

> I ran up on deck and glanced about me. And there she was down on the dock—Magdalene. She stood quietly looking up at me, and I jumped onto the gangplank and rushed down to her.
>
> I had better finish my speeches to everyone else, she said. She would go back to her hotel, and I could join her later.
>
> I did as she bade me. Then I went back to her, and have remained with her ever since.

Finally, he learns, one can transcend even escapism. The triumphant reconciliation is just the right note with which to end the complex and memorable romance that *Arctic Adventure* actually is under its epical cast.

Jesse Bier is a professor of English at the University of Montana in Missoula.

LIBERAL ARTS

THE LAST REFUGE OF SCOUNDRELS

Harrison loves my country too,
But wants it all made over new.
He's Freudian Viennese by night.
By day he's Marxian Muscovite. . . .
With him the love of country means
Blowing it all to smithereens
And having it all made over new.

—from "A Case for Jefferson"
by Robert Frost

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Jeanne Berg

Five Plays in Search of a Character

by Katherine Dalton

In recent years Actors Theatre of Louisville's artistic director Jon Jory has come under fire for the relative weakness of his new play festival. He should be happy that this year's season was stronger. Like any other genre, playwriting is a craft, and if nothing else was evident, it was clear from the eight plays ATL produced in March and April that much of the art of structuring a play has not been completely forgotten. I wished, sometimes, the playwrights had had more to say; but it's heartening that several of them at least knew how to say it.

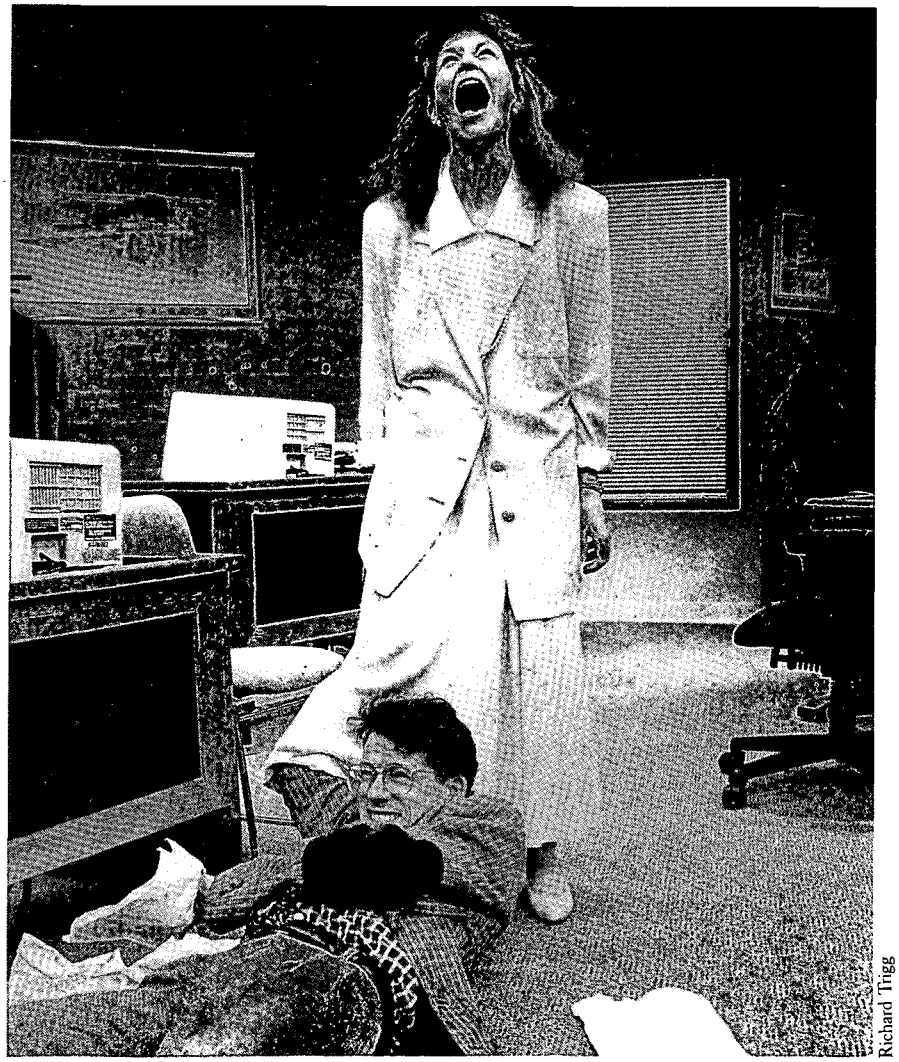
Where the plays had the most trouble was with characterization—in fact, these new plays could be divided into two groups: those with characters, and those without. While novelist Harry Crews' maiden effort at playwriting, *Blood Issue*, has some structural problems, it did have real (or at least realistic) people in it—very wonderful and very Crewsian gritty Southern gothic characters. That was enough to make *Blood Issue*, despite its structural weaknesses, the best play of the festival.

Writer and rake and very much his creator's stand-in Joe has returned home to rural Georgia to his twice-widowed mother and assorted other family for a reunion. He is also there to dig up some truths about his past that no one in the family wants to face or know. It is difficult to take modern idiom and make art of it, but that is Harry Crews' specialty, and the same language that makes his books so good made this play. "To tell the truth," says Joe, and Crews has written this elsewhere as well, "I never could trust a man who could get through life cold sober." And in another equally autobiographical line, his mother Mabel says that "no man's a scandal in his own heart."

The only other full-length play with real people in it, Charlene Redick's *Autumn Elegy*, was much weaker. In this play a married couple, who retreated from the world together after the '29 Crash, now must face separation as Ciel leaves her husband to go off to a hospital to die. It is a moving story, and the audience was in tears at the end of both acts, but the language alternates between flatness and a strained attempt at poetry. In the end, pity alone is not enough to make a play.

Of the plays without characters, or I should say in which the characters are given very little characterization, Steven Dietz's was perhaps the best—as theater, or spectacle, if not as a play. *God's Country* is about the Northwestern neo-Nazi survivalists who perpetrated a string of murders, robberies, and counterfeitings in the early 80's. This is a play about patriotism turned to sedition, strong stuff. Dietz insists that he put no words in his characters' mouths, that the truth of what they said in court and in their various books and publications is looney enough.

Linked over the course of the play



Richard Trigg

Suzanna Hay loses her composure as Keith Reddin inadvertently catches his ring in her slip, in a scene from Richard Strand's comedy of corporate manners, The Bug.

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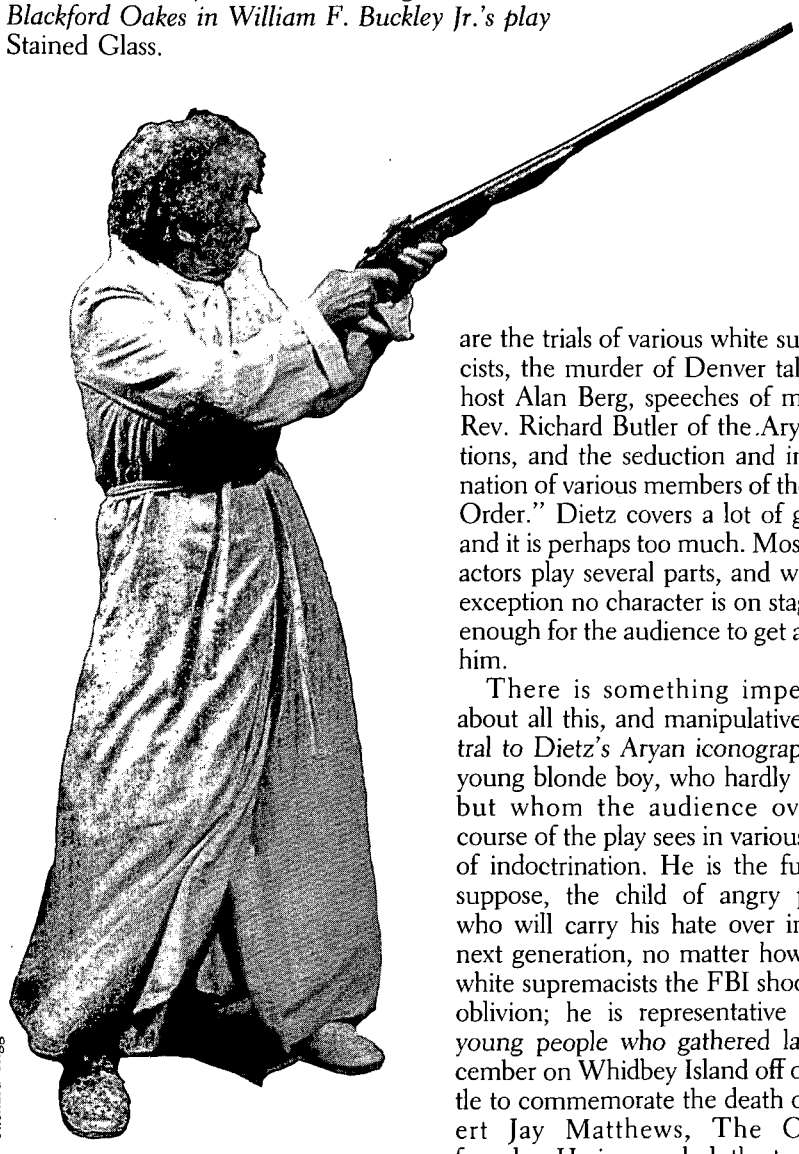
William McNulty as Count Wintergrin and William Carden as Blackford Oakes in William F. Buckley Jr.'s play Stained Glass.



Richard Trigg

Anne Pitoniak as Mabel in Harry Crews' Blood Issue.

are the trials of various white supremacists, the murder of Denver talk show host Alan Berg, speeches of men like Rev. Richard Butler of the Aryan Nations, and the seduction and indoctrination of various members of the "The Order." Dietz covers a lot of ground, and it is perhaps too much. Most of the actors play several parts, and with one exception no character is on stage long enough for the audience to get a feel of him.

There is something impersonal about all this, and manipulative. Central to Dietz's Aryan iconography is a young blonde boy, who hardly speaks, but whom the audience over the course of the play sees in various stages of indoctrination. He is the future, I suppose, the child of angry parents who will carry his hate over into the next generation, no matter how many white supremacists the FBI shoots into oblivion; he is representative of the young people who gathered last December on Whidbey Island off of Seattle to commemorate the death of Robert Jay Matthews, The Order's founder. He is a symbol; the trouble is he's all symbol. Plays work best when they have people in them, not mouthpieces and straw men. You run into problems when there is no literal level to your play, and Dietz doesn't have one — except the utterly literal level of his research. He has not written a play, he has staged a documentary, even if he has staged it well.

The festival's one disaster was Constance Congdon's *Tales of the Lost Formicans*, an extraterrestrial anthropology class on humans. Much better was Richard Strand's *The Bug*, a satire on the bureaucracy of corporate America (an employee concerned about job security unleashes chaos with a simple question). It was, again, a two-dimensional piece of work — the characters were vice presidents and underlings, not people. Of course that's precisely Strand's point, that the office makes automatons of us, and the play as a whole was well-structured and amusing.

Even more satirical — often obscenely so — was Arthur Kopit's *Bone-the-Fish*, in which an ex-producer undergoes an increasingly horrible set of humiliations in order to earn the chance to get in on the biggest film deal of his life. In its terrible way this play has as good a first act as a satire can. Suffice it to say that all the language Californians use metaphorically to describe humiliation becomes, in Kopit's Hollywood, literal. The hapless Jerry bleeds for this deal, and that's just for starters. Unfortunately, once the deal-making moves to the house of rock star Zalinka in the second act, the play loses all of its momentum and much of its humor, keeping only its rather sharp edge.

The most traditional play was, fittingly enough, William F. Buckley Jr.'s adaptation of his novel *Stained Glass*. Rumor had it the actors had some trouble with the language — they said the characters all spoke as Buckley speaks — and that rewrites were coming in from Buckley in Switzerland, usually a sign of some trouble. But the actors didn't stumble, and while I found Blackford Oakes as unsympathetic a character on stage as I do in print, this was a workmanlike if highly traditional play. Bill McNulty, especially, was excellent as Count Axel Wintergrin, fighting to reunify the two Germanies following World War II. The cause is a dead one, and the period long enough ago to be dated,

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while perhaps not quite far back enough to be history, but in Buckley's working out of the dangers of détente, his play has currency as a standing warning to advocates of game strategy theory in Washington.

Last but not least comes Brad Korbesmeyer's *Incident at San Bajo*, chosen from among 1,700 other submissions to win ATL's one-act play contest. His very nice play is the story of seven survivors of the (fictional) poisoning of an entire small town in California, told from the point of view of each. *Incident at San Bajo*, like *God's Country*, is constructed like a documentary; there is no plot, just the winding out of the characters' fantastic stories. But Korbesmeyer does that well, and unlike Steven Dietz, Korbesmeyer has assembled a wonderful and varied set of characters.

Jon Jory is proud, I would think, of his reputation for taking risks. His whole formation of a new play festival was a risk for which he should only be congratulated. He has taken the further risk of commissioning a large number of new plays from established writers who are not experienced as playwrights (like Crews and Buckley this year, or Jimmy Breslin last year, or E.L. Doctorow next year). Sometimes this pans out; the Crews play especially is quite good. But sometimes it doesn't. And while I understand that the job of wading through thousands of unsolicited scripts was colossal, it is evident from the Korbesmeyer play—a better play even in a staged reading than several of the commissioned works that had full productions—what is available out there, often from unknowns. (Mr. Korbesmeyer had been working in management for a fast-food company and trying unsuccessfully to break into television.)

One of the best-known plays to come out of Louisville, John Pielmeier's *Agnes of God*, which has been on Broadway and was made into a movie, came out of nowhere, back in 1980, in the fourth year of the festival. Ditto for Beth Henley, whose *Crimes of the Heart* also premiered in Louisville, in 1979. Except for the one-acts, which can still come in unsolicited and get their reading, the Great American Play Contest Jory founded in 1978 was discontinued in 1986, and I regret that.

In garnering Doctorow and fiction writer Tama Janowitz for next year's festival Jory has gone straight to New York. That's too bad, as no place is more provincial. It's worth remembering that another of Jon Jory's most successful finds was *Getting Out*, a play in the 1978 season written by not just an unknown but an unknown *Louisvillian* named Marsha Norman. It also seems noteworthy to me to see that some of the best acting performances in this 1989 festival were by ATL regulars or former regulars—Bill McNulty in *Stained Glass*, Bob Burris and Anne Pitoniak in *Blood Issue*. Long-time company member Adale O'Brien also did a nice job in Buckley's play. ATL has found, commissioned, and produced a lot of good work, but it is this local (or regional) talent that it should be happiest about and that is, I believe, its strongest asset.

Katherine Dalton is managing editor of Chronicles.

LETTERS

Jeanne Berg

The Fallacy of Descriptivism

by Steven Goldberg

People with more than a passing interest in words fall into two groups: prescriptivist and descriptivist. The prescriptivist believes that there is an ideal of correctness in the use of words, shifting and temporally-based as it ultimately may be. The descriptivist finds the concept of "correctness" elitist at best. More often, he finds it incomprehensible.

The one inviolable rule of descriptivism is this: there are no correct definitions, meanings, or usages other than those used by people-in-general; any attempt to impose some other definition is invalid. Where the prescriptivist subordinates popular usage to correctness, the descriptivist rejects all other criteria except those used by people-in-general.

Now consider what happens when you ask a descriptivist how he defines "dictionary."

The descriptivist might, as his inviolable rule says he must, accept the popular definition of "dictionary." If he does this, he will have to define "dictionary" in the commonly accepted sense of a book giving correct definitions that are determined by a literary elite. This, after all, is what most people mean when they say "dictionary." The descriptivist must accept the common view that there is a correct usage—in this case correct definitions—because his inviolable rule requires that he accept the view of people-in-general. In granting that there is a correct usage, the descriptivist grants what his inviolable rule, his basic premise, denies.

The descriptivist might, on the other hand, reject the generally accepted definition and substitute the definition of "dictionary" implied by his inviolable rule, the definition that *denies* that there is a "correct" usage other than that used by people-in-general. But if he does this, he does the one thing that his inviolable rule prohibits: he substitutes a "correct" definition for the only definition that his basic premise grants as legitimate: the definition used by people-in-general.

The descriptivist cannot argue that people-in-general are incorrect in defining a "dictionary" as giving correct usage because "incorrect" (or "wrong") has no meaning in the descriptivist universe (except, perhaps, to describe a misrepresentation of the usage of people-in-general, which is just what the descriptivist does if he alters the popular definition of "dictionary").

Whether the descriptivist accepts or rejects the popular definition of "dictionary," his descriptivism is exposed as rotten at its core. The contradiction is not merely an oddity relevant only to a single definition. The problem of defining "dictionary" is but a focused

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view of a contradiction that infuses all of descriptivism, and it can be stated without reference to a definition of "dictionary." The general contradiction is that descriptivism is founded on an axiom that accepts "A" (popular usage) and rejects "B" (any other authority or criterion for correctness) even when acceptance of "A" commits descriptivism to an acceptance of "B," which is rejected by the axiom ("A") that requires its acceptance.

There are problems with descriptivism that many will find even more serious than the failure of logical structure. Descriptivism would have us almost immediately follow the lead of people-in-general, even when doing so would eradicate a distinction that increases precision. So, for example, as soon as people begin to ignore the distinction between "continuous" (how a faucet runs) and "continual" (how a faucet drips), the distinction dissolves for the descriptivist. The prescriptivist, on the other hand, believes that when a distinction increases precision, as does the distinction between "continuous" and "continual," there is every reason to maintain it well past the point where most have begun to ignore it.

There does, no doubt, often come a time when only the etymologist remembers a worthwhile distinction, and by that point even the prescriptivist has come to favor ignoring it. But while a significant minority maintains the distinction, so that its fate remains in question, the prescriptivist favors retention. Indeed, it is primarily this that makes him a prescriptivist.

Now it might seem, and often is the case, that the prescriptivist is the conservative yearning for stability, while the descriptivist is the radical who sees the hands of the people as the only proper repository for power, linguistic or otherwise. But this is not always so. Some of us find the most dependable defense against the tendentiousness of *all* groups, the literary elite included, to be a precision of language that exposes muddled thought.

The difference between the prescriptivist who is an elitist and the prescriptivist who trusts not even the literary elite can be seen in the defense each supplies for his prescriptivism. While both are interested primarily in precision and the other virtues of correct usage, the elitist tends to accept for its own sake the value of speaking and writing like—indeed being like—the literary elite that provides his correct definitions and usages. He identifies with the literary elite and sees as correct not merely the precise, but the "appropriate."

The nonelitist prescriptivist, on the other hand, cares primarily about the precision. Moved only by valid argument, he rejects the assessments made by the literary elite when the assessment is supported only by self-appeal. Analogously, he is likely to ignore the illogical rule stating that the quotation marks at the end of the preceding paragraph should come after the period. Likewise, the prescriptivist of this stripe rarely has much interest in pronunciation, because mispronunciation rarely interferes with the rigor, precision, and communication that are his interests.

The distinction between the two types of prescriptivists can be seen in their differing attitudes towards the distinction between "less" and "fewer." The traditionalist prescriptivist does not question the value of the claim that "less" must be used with the continuous (a stream of water) and "fewer" with the discrete (drops of water). I must admit that I abhor the increasing use of "less people" as much as does the traditionalist prescriptivist. But my point is precisely that feelings on such matters—whether one's own feelings or those of an elite—have no persuasive power when not supported by valid argument. "Less people" sounds terrible only because of the rule that one must maintain the alleged distinction between "less" and "fewer." If, as I suggest, the distinction is not a legitimate one, then a sensibility rooted in the illegitimate distinction is illegitimate as well.

Superficially, the distinction between "less" and "fewer" seems analogous to that between "continuous" and "continual." But note the crucial difference between the two pairs: the distinction between "continuous" and "continually" increases precision by providing information not otherwise provided: "the leak is continuous" is different from "the leak is continual."

In the case of "less" and "fewer," however, the information that determines the choice of words *must be stated* (i.e., *"less water"* or "fewer *drops of water*"). Thus, the distinction between "less" and "fewer" does not provide any new information of precision; the distinction is merely redundant. The only effect of this redundancy is to increase inelegance.

Now, the inevitable response to all this by the traditionalist prescriptivist is to argue that such "logic chopping" would maim, if not rend, the language. The problem with this criticism is that its assumption is untrue: removing redundant distinctions like that between "less" and "fewer" would not do any harm to the language, but would merely remove a few analogous nondistinctions (like that between "amount" and "number").

The first fact I ever heard about our language remains the fact that most impresses me: no two synonyms mean exactly the same thing. The capacity for precision that this fact implies is our language's greatest strength. (No one has ever claimed for English the honor of being the most euphonious or most easily-learned language.) We should not let the language shred at the edges for no reason.

There are many other aspects of English for which elegance, simplicity, and precision do not justify the jettisoning of distinctions. We would not, for example, change all of the present-tense forms of "to be" to "am" ("I am," "you am," "he am" . . .) because, at the very least, euphony would be lost. In the case of "to be," in other words, there is a need met by the maintenance of distinctions and the distinctions are not, therefore, redundant. But this cannot be said for the nondistinction between "less" and "fewer" and the few nondistinctions analogous to that between "less" and "fewer." That such distinctions are not necessary is clear from the fact that it has been hundreds of years since anyone has had the nerve to insist that we distinguish between "more" and "mo" when describing "water" and "drops of water."

Steven Goldberg is an associate professor at City College in New York. His work has appeared in The Yale Review, Psychiatry, American Anthropologist, Journal of Psychiatry and Neurology, *and* Ethics.

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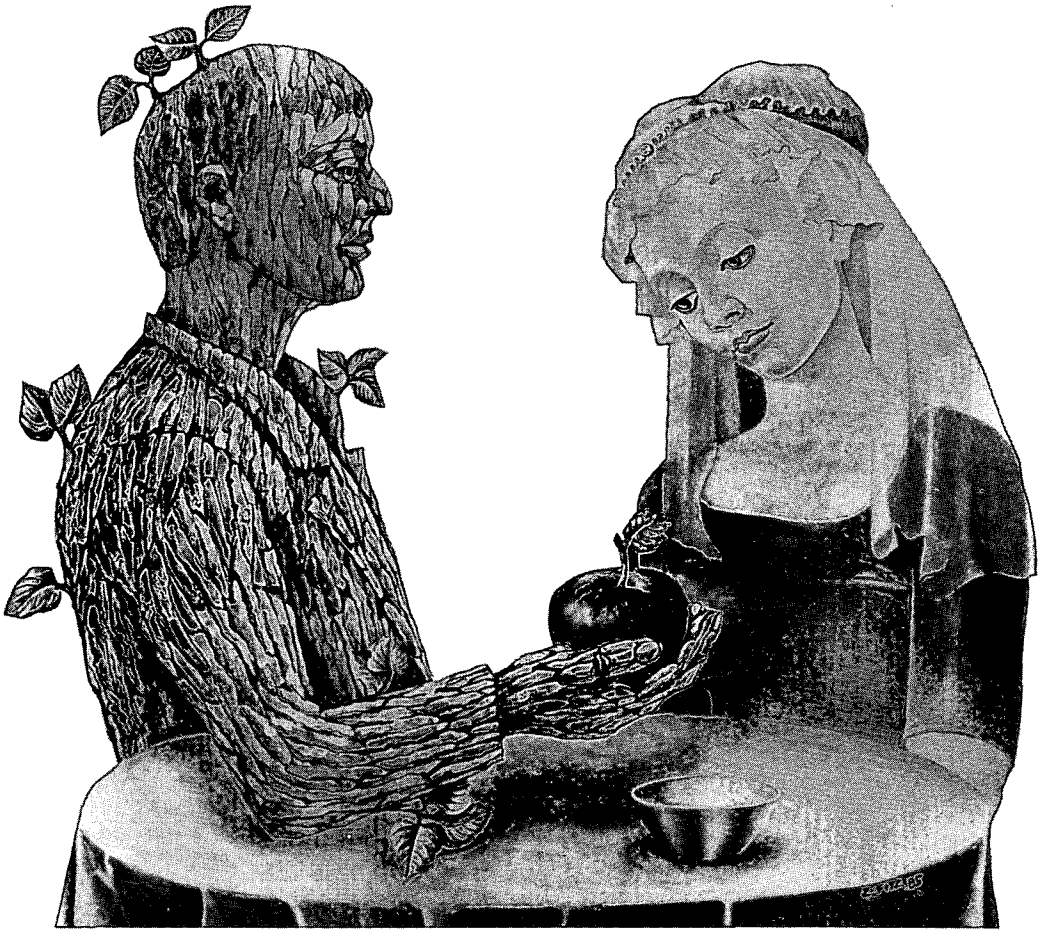

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